United Nations A/63/PV.28

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

28th plenary meeting
Friday, 17 October 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 103

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President: The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2008.

The five outgoing non-permanent members are the following: Belgium, Indonesia, Italy, Panama and South Africa. Those five States cannot be re-elected. Their names, therefore, should not appear on the ballot papers.

Apart from the five permanent members, the Security Council will include in the year 2009 the following States: Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Viet Nam. The names of those States, therefore, should also not appear on the ballot papers.

Of the five non-permanent members that will remain in office in the year 2009, three are from Africa and Asia, one is from Eastern Europe and one is from Latin America and the Caribbean. Consequently, pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII), of 17 December 1963, the five non-permanent members should be elected according to the following pattern: two from Africa and Asia, one from Latin America and the Caribbean and two from Western Europe and other States. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

In accordance with established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that, of the two States to be elected from Africa and Asia, one should be from Africa and one from Asia.

I should like to inform the Assembly that those candidates, their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, receiving the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

Regarding candidatures, I have been informed by the Chairpersons of the respective regional groups of the following. For the two vacant seats from among the African and Asian States, there are three candidates, namely, Uganda, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Japan. Of those three candidates, Uganda is an endorsed candidate.

Members are reminded that, in keeping with established practice, of the two States to be elected

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from Africa and Asia, one should be from Africa and one from Asia.

For the one vacant seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, there is one endorsed candidate, namely, Mexico. For the two vacant seats from among the Western European and other States, there are three candidates, namely, Austria, Iceland and Turkey.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "A", "B" and "C" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been distributed.

May I ask representatives to write clearly on the ballot papers marked "A", for the African and Asian States, the names of the two States for which they wish to vote; on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote; and on the ballot papers marked "C", for the Western European and other States, the names of the two States for which they wish to vote.

A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if all the names of the Member States on that ballot do not belong to the relevant region. If a ballot paper contains names of Member States that do not belong to that region, the ballot remains valid, but only the names of the Member States that belong to the relevant region will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Stone (Australia), Ms. Del Águila-Castillo (Guatemala), Ms. Kiruthu (Kenya), Ms. Beshimova (Kyrgyzstan), Mr. Zilgalvis (Latvia) and Mr. Mallia (Malta) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African and Asian States

Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	1
Number of Members voting:	191
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Uganda	181
Japan	158
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	32
Madagascar	2

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	6
Number of Members voting:	186
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Number of votes obtained:	
Mexico	185
Brazil	1

Group C — Western European and other States

Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	192
Abstentions:	0
Number of Members voting:	192
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Turkey	151
Austria	133
Iceland	87
Australia	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, the following States were elected members of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning 1 January 2009: Austria, Japan, Mexico, Turkey and Uganda.

The President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Security Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 103.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.29

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

29th plenary meeting
Monday, 20 October 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda items 57 and 43 (*continued*)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/206)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/212)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/219)

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda): My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Antigua and Barbuda at the 27th meeting and Kenya at the 26th meeting on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Group of African States, respectively.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his reports on progress in implementation of and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/63/206), and the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/63/212), and for his note entitled "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa" (A/63/219).

Regarding progress in implementation of and international support for NEPAD, Rwanda welcomes the adoption of the political declaration (resolution 63/1) at the conclusion of the high-level meeting on Africa's development needs on 22 September 2008, as well as the recommendations of the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group. We firmly believe that, if implemented, they offer Africa a way forward in addressing the many challenges we face.

Rwanda is committed to addressing her peculiar development challenges under the umbrella of NEPAD and through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals, and we have undertaken a number of initiatives to realize those commitments.

Mr. Siles Alvarado (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Rwanda places information and communication technology (ICT) at the heart of its development strategy. The Kigali protocol, signed in Kigali on 29 August 2006, is the protocol on the policy and regulatory framework for the NEPAD ICT broadband infrastructure network. The protocol came into force on 13 February 2008 and will guide the implementation of the NEPAD ICT broadband infrastructure network, comprised of Uhurunet — the submarine segment — and Umojanet — the terrestrial segment — in order to provide quality and affordable telecommunications connectivity to Eastern and Southern Africa and to the

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rest of the African continent. This network will be a major step towards interconnecting the African continent and helping to bridge the digital divide. We therefore urge those countries that have yet to ratify the Kigali protocol to do so to ensure its implementation.

The NEPAD e-Schools Demonstration Project — the Demo — aims to equip African schools with appropriate ICT, equipment and apparatus to ensure that African youth graduate from primary and secondary schools with the relevant skills and to contribute towards improving education on the continent by introducing appropriate ICT through training and by providing appropriate digital content to all African schools to enable them to function effectively in the information society and knowledge economy. The e-Schools Demo is being implemented through the Information Society Partnership for Africa's Development (INSPAD), and under INSPAD leadership, two companies — Cisco and Microsoft — have formed a consortium in support of Rwanda.

Rwanda's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) country review report was published in November 2005. Since then we have registered tremendous progress in all the focus areas of the APRM.

On democracy and good political governance, Rwanda has conducted successful elections at the local and national levels, and after our recently concluded parliamentary elections women, for the first time in history, hold 56 per cent of the parliamentary seats, leading not only Africa but the world. We have also registered significant progress in decentralization and in reform of the judicial sector.

On economic governance and management, Rwanda is now fully compliant with the best practices for budget transparency. We remain committed to a zero-tolerance policy on corruption and have established institutions to enforce that policy. There has been significant progress in corporate governance through enacting corporate legislation and in socio-economic development through our Vision 2020 and second-generation Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The progress Rwanda and Africa have made in implementing their commitments under NEPAD is there for all to see. However, that progress risks being eroded by the food, energy and economic crises, all of which impact on Africa far more than they do on any other continent. It is therefore imperative that the international community respond to those crises promptly and decisively through the full implementation of the political declaration on Africa's development needs (resolution 63/1) and of the recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group. However, trade and investment are Africa's true guarantors for economic and social development, and it is critical that the Doha Development Round resume to ensure that Africa plays its rightful role in the global trading system.

Concerning causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, Rwanda welcomes the various initiatives that have been undertaken by the international community to prevent conflict in Africa. We particularly welcome the partnerships between the United Nations and the African Union to prevent and respond to conflict in Africa. I wish to emphasize that Rwanda strongly believes that prevention remains the best and preferred method to promote peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The Secretary-General's report (A/63/212) paints an optimistic picture of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we would very much wish to share his optimism. However, as recent events have shown, the situation remains far from optimistic. The failure comprehensively to address the threat posed by the genocidal forces of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the ex-Forces armées rwandaises/Interahamwe to the people of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as set out in the Nairobi communiqué and in Security Council resolution 1804 (2008), has led to the perpetuation of conflict. We therefore call upon the international community to ensure that the United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo implement their commitments, as set out in the Nairobi communiqué and Security Council resolution 1804 (2008).

Rwanda welcomes the partnerships that regional organizations have forged with the United Nations on peacekeeping operations, in particular the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. Rwanda remains firmly committed to its role as a major troop contributor to that force.

(*spoke in French*)

With regard to the 2001-2010 Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa, the report transmitted by the Secretary-General's note (A/63/219) shows the progress made, especially in Africa, in the struggle to eliminate malaria.

The World Malaria Report indicates that Rwanda has managed to reduce the cases of malaria by 66 per cent over a six-year period. By 2012, we aim to reach the preliminary phase of eradicating that disease, which means that we will then have less than one case of confirmed malaria per 1,000 inhabitants. Our progress has been possible particularly as a result of the following actions: the promotion of massive distribution of moderately priced long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets, prompt and specific treatment through appropriate artemisinin combination therapy — ACT — medicines, the implementation of home-based management of fever by community health workers, control of the disease through campaigns of indoor spraying of homes, an increase in the use of health services, and an increase in the number of individuals with health insurance.

Rwanda remains fully committed to the fight to eradicate the disease in Rwanda and Africa.

Mr. Terzi de Sant'Agata (Italy): First of all, I should like to thank the representative of France for his statement on behalf of the European Union, with which I fully agree. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/63/206).

In its capacity as incoming President of the Group of Eight (G8), Italy has taken note of the call made by the President of the General Assembly — which was reiterated by Kenya on behalf of the African Union and by many other colleagues, including the representative of Rwanda, who just spoke — to prevent the current turbulence in world markets from pushing Africa's needs off the radar screen of the international community. Let me reassure the Assembly that we will do everything in our power to that end. Indeed, this is the time for the G8 to relaunch its partnership with Africa and to act as a catalyst for renewed efforts at all levels in support of NEPAD.

The United Nations is the natural and necessary place where our efforts should be coordinated and our strategies defined, in full accordance with the vision of the African membership. The High-Level Meeting on Africa's development needs was a very significant opportunity. I would like to recall that, at the G8 Summit held in Genoa seven years ago, Italy proposed an Africa Action Plan that was later approved at the G8 Summit held in Kananaskis, Canada. The plan is focused on the very same objectives that NEPAD is pursuing: an Africa free of conflicts, hunger and violations of human rights.

A collective commitment to targeted action in the areas of aid and trade was widely requested by African leaders during the High-Level Meeting. Italy intends to convey that sense of urgency at the 2009 G8 Summit. The elements emerging from this debate will therefore be equally and duly reflected in our proposals for the Summit.

We have taken careful note of the expectation in Africa for enhanced resource flows. Indeed, improving the quality of assistance is a key priority. Governance in Africa is improving at both the national and the local levels. At the same time, assistance should become better coordinated and more predictable; it should be less bound to conditions. We should seek greater harmonization among donors, avoiding useless duplication. The High-Level Forum held in Accra underscored the depth of those concerns. After the Rome, Paris and Accra declarations, we see next November's Doha Conference as a key opportunity for further progress in those areas.

The goal of a conflict-free Africa, set by the heads of State and Government of the African Union, is equally strategic. Our common denominator should remain the promotion of African ownership in the maintenance of peace and security on the continent.

My Government is committed to supporting strengthened African institutions in the areas of early warning, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. The 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union should be seen as a keystone of the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the European Union, that are active in Africa. To that end, my Government has contributed €40 million to the African Peace Facility.

Action in the field should be supported by a clear political vision. That is why the decision-making process at the United Nations should respect and act on

the principle of African ownership, which we recognize for regional and subregional organizations in Africa. As an elected member of the Security Council, my country is committed to abiding by that principle. We believe that further improvement in the cooperation between the Council and the main regional stakeholders would constitute a strong asset in ensuring concrete results in the area of crisis management. The joint meeting held on 16 April 2008 between the United Nations Security Council and members of the African Union Peace and Security Council was a significant step in that process.

Nevertheless, the sustainability of our policies will depend on our success in tackling the root causes of instability. Combating extreme poverty, youth unemployment, and environmental degradation, as well as pandemics such as malaria, which undermine Africa's human resources, is a truly collective interest. It is therefore essential that each member of the international community be fully committed to facing those challenges.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its support for the political declaration (resolution 63/1) adopted on 22 September 2008 on the occasion of the High-Level Meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward". The Declaration reaffirms the belief of Member States in a prosperous future for Africa in which the core human values of dignity and peace are fully enshrined.

Kazakhstan supports the efforts of the United Nations and of the international community as a whole to mobilize resources for the implementation of programmes and projects within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is considered a central agenda in the field of development for the continent. We also thank the Secretary-General for establishing the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to leverage international support for NEPAD.

Substantial progress has been made globally in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed goals. However, Kazakhstan notes with regret that, as we approach the midpoint for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, specified in 2000, Africa remains the only continent that is lagging behind on every Goal, despite a very encouraging recent rise in the rate of economic growth and overall improvement in the policy environment on the continent.

Acknowledging the leading role of the United Nations in the implementation of NEPAD, we believe that the Organization and its structural divisions should reconsider their approach to the distribution of funds in order to strengthen their support for African countries in their efforts to achieve the MDGs by the specified deadline. The recent rise in food prices is putting great pressure on African economies and threatening to unravel hard-won progress in fighting hunger and malnutrition. However, the crisis also offers a window of opportunity for increasing needed expenditures in the area of agriculture and to remove the obstacles to an open trading system for agricultural commodities to benefit African countries.

As a landlocked country facing trade problems, we understand Africa's difficulties in overcoming trade barriers that hinder the export of produce to the international markets and raw production-related export. As reflected in the recent outcome document of the High-Level Meeting on the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action (resolution 63/2), Africa's infrastructure needs must be addressed in a regional manner if countries are to reap the benefits of economies of scale, to develop intra-African trade and to enhance competition in the global economy. In that regard, the Doha Round of negotiations should determine the trade preferences to be granted to Africa in order to accelerate its development.

As a country with an economy in transition and large deposits of natural resources, Kazakhstan is very well aware of the problems faced by African countries seeking to enter the system of international economic relations. In that regard, Kazakhstan fully supports the efforts of the Group of Eight and other donor countries to ease the debt burden through both multilateral and bilateral means, and to promote foreign direct investment that would enable the expansion of capacities, the diversification and development of regional markets and the creation of a highly qualified human resources pool.

We believe that the primary responsibility for achieving development goals remains with African Governments, which have shown tremendous leadership in recent years. However, in order to

achieve the MDGs, external public financing for development must be raised to $72 billion per year.

In that regard, my delegation is concerned about the decrease in official development assistance (ODA) to Africa in recent years and believes that the United Nations should be playing a critical role in achieving the Goal that addresses partnership development and in ensuring that donor countries fulfil their commitments on the attainment of the MDGs, especially in Africa. At the same time, it is important not only to increase the volume of external resources but also to improve aid quality in alignment with countries' priorities.

It is with great satisfaction that we acknowledge the active cooperation that has been taking place in the context of South-South cooperation between developing countries and middle-income countries. We believe that such cooperation will enable Africa's development to make progress. For our part, as a country that could overcome its crisis stemming from its economy in transition, we are ready to cooperate with countries from the African continent within the South-South cooperation framework and provide technical assistance in the financial and agricultural sectors, the training of experts and the diversification of the economy.

Taking into consideration the unstable situation on the continent that hinders well-rounded human development, we support the proposals to expand the Security Council to provide the maximum number of seats to African States in order to encourage greater involvement by those countries in the resolution of peace and security issues.

In conclusion, we hope that, in fulfilling its commitment to the continent that is appropriately named the cradle of humankind, the international community will join efforts to help the peoples of Africa in their quest for a decent life.

Mr. Gioia (United States of America): The United States congratulates the members of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) on their continued solid performance in the implementation of programmes that are enhancing good governance and economic growth across Africa. We remain a staunch supporter of NEPAD and believe that its activities are central to fulfilling the vision that each generation should do better than the one before it, in freedom, prosperity and security.

Along with good governance, infrastructure development and creating the conditions for sustained private investment, support for Africa's farmers remains central to achieving poverty eradication and the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As the Assembly knows, the African Union and President Bush hosted a meeting of global leaders from business, foundations and non-governmental organizations to help contribute to promoting food security by identifying commitments to partnerships along the agricultural value chain.

In response to the Africa Union's commitment to fast track the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the United States has pledged to work to tackle the key barriers to the implementation of the Programme. In addition to President Bush's $5.5 billion commitment to combat hunger and promote agricultural development, United States private-sector leaders have also responded.

Monsanto has announced that it is investing around $3 million per day, or over $1 billion a year, mainly in the areas of plant breeding and biotechnology, to develop better corn, cotton, soybeans and vegetable seeds. John Deere is focused on the expansion of appropriate farm equipment and technologies to significantly improve productivity with reduced tillage. Land O'Lakes partners with farmer groups and cooperatives in Africa to improve the incomes of poor small farmers and produce higher quality and more affordable dairy products for consumers. The Gates Foundation is working with a wide range of partners, seeking to enhance the complete agricultural value chain — from planting the highest quality seeds and improving farm management practices to bringing crops to market — and has committed more than $900 million to help small farmers in Africa and South Asia boost their productivity and incomes.

Already, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), founded in 2004, has made more than half its total grants of $5.5 billion in agricultural and rural development, with $1.7 billion going to African agriculture alone. The Millennium Challenge Corporation has also announced a collaborative venture between it and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.

The United States remains committed to supporting the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa

Agriculture Development Programme. We support the CAADP in six countries that are meeting their pledges and through the Initiative to End Hunger in Africa, which provides assistance in three areas: science and technology, linking producers to markets and reaching out to the vulnerable. Our support for the CAADP over a five-year period is approximately $200 million per year.

I would like to update the General Assembly on progress made under President Bush's Malaria Initiative (PMI). In 2005, we pledged more than $1.2 billion through 2010 for 15 of the hardest hit African countries. The PMI is partnering with host Governments, non-governmental organizations and faith-based and community groups to create access for the poorest of the poor to indoor residual spraying to keep deadly mosquitoes at bay, distribute insecticide-treated bednets and provide preventive malaria treatment for expectant mothers during their pregnancies.

The PMI also provides capacity-building for national implementation strategies. After two years of implementation, I can say that the PMI is making a significant impact. For example, in Zanzibar, the percentage of children who tested positive for malaria dropped from 20 per cent in 2005 to less than 1 per cent today. The United States has also become the largest contributor — $2.5 billion so far — to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Finally, we thank the Secretary-General and the members of the Secretariat who have provided us with the report (A/63/206) on the progress on implementation and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In that regard, we urge the United Nations Development Programme to continue and enhance their support in the field for African States and the implementation of NEPAD programmes.

In sum, as shown by our commitment to the African people in the areas of agriculture and the treatment and prevention of malaria, as well as in our many other initiatives to assist sub-Saharan Africa, the United States continues to stand with our African partners in achieving lasting poverty eradication and the promise of a better life for all.

Mr. Matenje (Malawi): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/63/206); his report on implementation of the recommendations contained in the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/63/212); and his note transmitting the report on the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (A/63/219).

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Kenya on behalf of the African Group and by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The reports before us indicate that there are many positive developments taking place in Africa. The launch of the African Union and its socio-economic development programme NEPAD; increased African leadership in resolving conflicts on the continent; a growing commitment to people-centred development and regional integration; and an increased willingness to discuss and tackle difficult political and socio-economic questions through the African Peer Review Mechanism, and to make the necessary reforms: these are all positive trends.

Despite those positive trends, Africa still faces challenges, including rising food and energy costs, climate change, the failure of the Doha Development Round and the collapse of international financial markets. Furthermore, due to deepening poverty, current economic gains being achieved on the continent and in individual African countries have yet to be translated into the visible wealth necessary to eradicate poverty, particularly among the poorest, who live on less than 1 dollar a day. Unless the commitments for achieving the NEPAD's objectives are fulfilled urgently and in full, Africa in general is unlikely to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), within the agreed time frames.

It is therefore no wonder that at the high-level meeting on Africa's development held on 22 September 2008, many African leaders issued a call to address the urgent need to promote international trade, foreign direct investment and infrastructure development in Africa, including in the agriculture, health and transport fields and in combating climate change. Malawi supports that call.

For its part, Malawi is currently implementing various agricultural initiatives, including an

agricultural subsidy programme targeted at poor smallholder farmers, with a view to achieving food and nutrition security and fighting poverty and hunger at the national level. Malawi is also developing green belts along its rivers and lakes in order to increase agricultural production to support its predominantly agro-based economy. Malawi hopes that such initiatives will enable us to achieve MDG 1.

In an effort to reduce transport costs and promote access to international trade, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia have submitted a project to NEPAD and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to open a water channel along the Shire river in Malawi and Mozambique and the Zambezi river in Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe to the Indian Ocean port of Chinde in Mozambique. We believe that the Shire-Zambezi Waterway Project constitutes an urgent solution to the transport challenges faced by Malawi, Zambia and the hinterland of Mozambique in accessing international trade. This is an example of the urgent solutions to Africa's development challenges envisaged in paragraph 39 of the Political Declaration on Africa's development adopted at the conclusion of the high-level meeting on Africa's development held on 22 September 2008 (resolution 63/1). Malawi welcomes the adoption of that Declaration. Accordingly, we look forward to receiving the support of the international community in implementing the Shire-Zambezi Waterway Project.

In this regard, we join those who have called on the industrialized countries to fulfil their NEPAD commitments to increase official development assistance and make it available as soon as possible to developing countries. We also call for an early resumption and conclusion of the Doha Development Round in order to give developing countries equitable access to international trade and enable them to create the wealth that is so badly needed to reduce poverty. We hope that the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus will present an opportunity for the international community to resolve the deadlock over the trade talks.

Malawi recognizes that economic development in Africa cannot be achieved without genuine peace and security. Accordingly, we welcome the progress achieved so far under the auspices of the United Nations to prevent new conflicts and resolve existing ones in Africa. We also commend the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission to foster sustainable peace and security in conflict-afflicted areas in Africa. Malawi will continue to play its part in the maintenance of peace and security as evidenced by its participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions on the continent and beyond.

Malaria continues to be one of the greatest threats to Africa's development. Its devastating effects are compounded by tuberculosis and HIV and AIDS, which affect millions of people. It is a major public health problem in Malawi and remains the most common cause of illness and death among children under 5 years of age and expectant women. Malaria alone accounts for 40 per cent of outpatient consultations at most health facilities in the country. To address the problem, the Malawi Government is implementing a Malaria Strategic Plan, which it formulated in line with the Roll Back Malaria Initiative. Under that plan, the Government has intensified the fight against malaria through measures including the distribution of insecticide-treated bednets, particularly to mothers and children under 5, and the prompt and effective treatment of malaria within 24 hours of the onset of illness. It is expected that 97 per cent of all households in our country will have at least one bednet by 2015.

While preventive measures such as the distribution of insecticide-treated bednets are most welcome, we believe that fundamental reforms must be made to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights with a view to making malaria, tuberculosis and HIV drugs readily available and affordable in Africa. In addition, cross-border initiatives should be intensified in order to make Africa a malaria-free continent.

In conclusion, Malawi appreciates the support it receives in the fight against malaria from its development partners, including the United Nations and its institutions, the Global Fund and President Bush's Malaria Initiative. We also welcome the Global Malaria Action Plan announced by Mr. Ray Chambers, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Malaria.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Ms. Ritola (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is honoured to take the floor in this important annual debate.

The IFRC's approach to African development starts from communities. We believe that sustainable development efforts should be based on enabling the poor and the vulnerable to better handle current and future risks. Empowering communities and making them the centre of action is at the heart of the IFRC.

Today, Africa is facing a development emergency, accumulated by the ongoing food and energy crises, climate change and the growing intensity of natural disasters. Those multidimensional challenges contribute to the increasing risk potentials and make more and more people vulnerable. The non-achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would further aggravate those vulnerabilities. Therefore, political will and commitment are as essential for human development as a successful pro-poor outcome in Doha.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as auxiliaries to their public authorities and with a presence virtually everywhere in the African continent, have a unique capacity to work with Governments to strengthen communities and drive development.

The role of National Societies is crucial, particularly in mobilizing millions of trained and respected volunteers to raise awareness on health and disaster risks, to promote good community practices and to support improved access to water and food resources. Our approach is consistent with the view of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of the importance of partnership-building. No Government or organization alone can make a significant difference to the challenges confronting Africa. The value of partnerships cannot be overestimated, and they must also involve communities in order to be truly effective.

The IFRC has responded to the food crisis by launching a five-year strategic food security framework with 15 National Societies in southern Africa. The purpose is to scale up our efforts in the area of national food security programming and to provide at least 20 per cent of the most vulnerable populations with longer-term food security support to enhance their resilience.

In Mali, as an effort to combat food insecurity in the Goundam Circle area, the Mali Red Cross has helped to improve the prospects of 43,000 people in the area and has given communities a new sense of purpose and hope.

In Burundi, as part of a three-year organizational development project, 30,000 volunteers have been trained in order to ensure that, by the end of the project, elected village committees will be supporting the provision of community services in more than 2,700 villages. The project has the generous support of the President of the Republic and others in Government, who see it as a crucial step in Burundi's development.

The IFRC's malaria programmes, with long-life insecticide-treated nets — more than 12 million of which have been distributed in malaria-endemic countries since 2002 — have been instituted with a wide range of partners, and their results have been truly remarkable in terms of reducing mortality and restoring community confidence. Our Global Alliance on HIV is a paradigm for returning Africa to the good health and prosperity that its people so richly deserve. These are not just programmes for public health, but essential ingredients in development programming.

Those examples are partnerships at work for Africa's development, reflecting the IFRC's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. We are taking this debate further ourselves. The seventh Pan-African Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is convening in Johannesburg as we speak, bringing together 53 African National Societies and observers from around the world, including Governments and the United Nations itself. It is our hope to dedicate ourselves to a new partnership stage under the slogan "Together for action in Africa". We look forward to presenting the outcomes of that important meeting and today express our sincere appreciation to the Government and the Permanent Mission of South Africa for their consistent support for our objectives.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Mr. Bené (Holy See): Unfortunately, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See Mission is not able to be here, and I am making this statement on his behalf.

My delegation is grateful for the extensive report of the World Health Organization (see A/63/219) on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/180, entitled "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa", and notes both the challenges in combating that disease and the progress made thus far.

The General Assembly's recent decision to give greater attention to developing countries, especially in Africa, is a positive step in the right direction, particularly because it recognizes that malaria can be substantially reduced through public awareness, education and the committing of resources to research and treatment. Given that, over the past 15 years, there has been an increased prevalence of the disease — which could well double the death rate over the next 20 years — it is imperative that the international community work together to fight this pandemic.

Each year, between 300 million and 500 million people contract malaria, which kills more than 1 million people, with at least one death occurring every 30 seconds. According to the World Health Organization, 90 per cent of such deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa, and the majority of victims are children under 5 years of age, with nearly 3,000 children dying every day in that region. Furthermore, the next-largest group of victims is composed of pregnant mothers. Malaria remains a major threat to human security. Because of the cost of prevention and treatment, those who live in poverty are those most susceptible to this serious disease.

A great number of committed individuals, especially skilled health personnel, are working in primary health centres and through various faith-based organizations in many of the most affected areas to care for and properly treat those who have been infected. These providers, who often go unnoticed, perform heroic acts of service by caring for those in need.

Our focus in addressing this disease must remain on research, prevention and treatment. We know that a reduction in malaria transmission is achieved through prevention of mosquito bites and control of the mosquito population. From that perspective, it seems opportune to recall the Abuja Declaration, which calls for, among other things, the development of mechanisms to facilitate the provision of reliable information to decision-makers at various epidemiological levels in order to enable health authorities to devise appropriate control and surveillance strategies.

Individuals must be able to receive affordable, safe and, where necessary, free diagnostic testing and drugs. Proper diagnosis is available, and infected individuals can make a full recovery if provided with adequate means. Efforts should be made so that appropriate treatment is accessible to those who are suffering.

Resources must continue to be allocated to ongoing research into the development of new, safe and cost-efficient vaccines, as well as medicines to treat those infected. Success in such endeavours will not fail to translate into a gradual reduction in the overall number of infections.

In particular, my delegation calls attention to positive efforts to assist those in need. One is reminded of the importance of educating families and helping them to care for their loved ones who have contracted malaria. Many Catholic organizations are deeply involved in that field, with wide and directed campaigns. Furthermore, they train community groups to educate parents and caregivers of young children infected with malaria.

Notwithstanding other serious infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, which demand equal attention, our efforts on malaria cannot be sidelined. Clearly, the global community must remain committed to fighting all diseases that threaten human lives and security.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

The President returned to the Chair.

The President: Our debate has been wide-ranging and informative and has served to sustain the momentum within the Assembly to build understanding and support for Africa's development.

I was particularly reassured by the emphasis that speakers gave to the deteriorating international financial environment in which we are working and within which Africa is struggling to find its rightful place in the world. Speakers cautioned that the global financial crisis that is unfolding must not undermine

the funding, the technical cooperation and the opening of markets in the North that Africans are counting on.

The solidarity expressed by industrialized countries, particularly by representatives of Europe, and the developing countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific regions, underscores the strong commitment that has been reinforced by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) framework. South-South cooperation is stronger than ever. The representatives from Africa have been clear about taking the leading role in the complex process of bringing good governance, peace and security and development to all Africans through regional and national initiatives inspired in no small part by NEPAD.

NEPAD, it is pointed out, has created an effective leadership process for engaging development partners on issues such as international trade arrangements, debt relief and official development assistance (ODA). Speakers have noted that progress will accelerate significantly if G8 countries reverse the decline in ODA and keep their promise to double ODA to Africa by 2010.

Additionally, as recommended by the Secretary-General's report, African countries should allocate more resources towards NEPAD priorities and encourage private-sector participation in partnership projects, particularly those public-private projects for infrastructure. There were also recommendations to launch an African green revolution and improve both economic and political governance through the increasingly effective African Peer Review Mechanism, an innovation that is recognized for creating an enabling environment in matters of governance and accountability.

The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa points out that Africa has made sustained efforts to promote peace, deepen its commitment to democratic processes and good governance over the past 10 years.

The African Union's Peace and Security Council and other structures at the regional level are playing an increasing role in mediating disputes between and within African countries. These mechanisms have also enabled Africans to address the terrible problems relating to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Still, our debate reminds us of the enormous complexity of the problems facing Africa. Today we have given special attention to the report on the campaign against malaria, which is of direct concern to half of the world's people. The stark fact is that 91 per cent of the deaths from that disease are in Africa. It is imperative that donors sustain the funding required to cut this mortality rate in half by 2010 and meet the related objectives within the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) framework.

Our debate must be seen in the broader and ongoing context of the General Assembly's special concern for Africa. It closely follows the high-level meeting on Africa's development needs held on 22 September and the High-level Event on the MDGs held on 25 September, which focused again on Africa. We will deepen the process at the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development at the end of November.

Clearly the deteriorating international financial environment highlights the urgent need for the international community to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that addresses both the unresolved causes of continuing violent conflict on the continent and the need for a proactive approach to new issues as they emerge. As President, I am committed to work with Member States to promote such an effort.

With each opportunity, we stand witness to the emergence of new African leaders who are working to ensure that Africa's development benefits Africans first. We clearly support this new paradigm. I think the Deputy Permanent Representative of China put it very clearly when he stated that we must listen to African voices, respect African views, accommodate African concerns and support Africa's efforts to implement its own programmes. This is our collective responsibility and it is gratifying to know how seriously it is being taken.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 57 and its sub-items (a) and (b) and agenda item 43.

Agenda item 106

Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/213)

Draft resolution (A/63/L.5)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to make some remarks regarding our consideration of this agenda item. The abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in 1808 seems to have happened long ago, but I believe most of us appreciate the importance of bringing this historic event to the attention of the General Assembly and the world.

The abolition of the slave trade, which criss-crossed the Atlantic from Africa to Europe, Latin America and North America for hundreds of years, did not actually end slavery. However, it was an important step towards this ban, marking one of the early decisions by the international community to join forces to combat the brutal and enormously lucrative slave trade.

It is a tragedy that the slave trade and slavery itself continue to have deep, though largely invisible, effects on our world today.

This year, on 25 March, the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade was commemorated for the first time. I have always been an advocate of forgiveness and reconciliation. But the slave trade constitutes one of those horrendous crimes against humanity that many Africans have been generous enough to forgive but that none of us, anywhere in the world, should forget.

The slave trade, it is widely recognized, was an institution that not only devastated a continent but poisoned the roots of societies, young and old, by its corrosive presence. We all continue to suffer the consequences of that exploitation — obviously, some of us much more than others.

In virtually all societies around the world, slavery remains with us, often invisible and tolerated on an international scale.

Slavery was a socio-economic model that treated people like goods, a system of social relations based on domination and the denigrating treatment of people, one of the worst forms of discrimination and social exclusion. Transatlantic slavery was for centuries a scourge in the world. Millions lost their lives in the long march through Africa and the subsequent transatlantic crossing. Millions were exploited under brutal conditions, and on their shoulders and lives an alien society was built that excluded them and denied them their status as human beings.

Sixty years ago, in 1948, the General Assembly proclaimed in article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and in article 2 that:

> "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion ... or other status."

Afterwards, in 1955, the Convention on Slavery entered into force.

Years later, in 2001, we adopted the Durban Declaration, which stated that

> "slavery and the slave trade, including the transatlantic slave trade, were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity not only because of their abhorrent barbarism but also in terms of their magnitude, organized nature and especially their negation of the essence of the victims, and [we] further acknowledge that slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity and should always have been so, especially the transatlantic slave trade and are among the major sources and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and that Africans and people of African descent, Asians and people of Asian descent and indigenous peoples were victims of these acts and continue to be victims of their consequences".

The adoption of all these instruments was the fruit of titanic struggles to eradicate imperial domination from peoples' minds and from legal systems and to finally recognize that human rights are for everyone.

On this commemoration of the abolition of slavery, we must recognize that the rich countries established the foundations of their economies in the sweat and lives of millions of African slaves. States

must not be content with removing slavery from their legal systems; we must identify new forms of slavery and combat them and eradicate them from the planet. We must do the same with regard to their consequences: neocolonialism, systems of discrimination, economic inequalities and the demands of multilateral organizations to hand over reserves and natural resources as interest payments on an immoral external debt.

In the nineteenth century and even in the twentieth century, many laws on the abolition of slavery provided compensation for slave owners. Today, States must think of different ways to compensate for the cultural, economic and social outrages committed against African countries. Plans and coherent strategies are needed for material, moral and ethical compensation. We cannot limit ourselves to monetary reparation, because it is not a question of paying and forgetting. We must never forget and return to that infamy. We must ask forgiveness and consciously acknowledge the damage done by one part of humanity. Accepting it by the other part should not be a passive acceptance, but active and transformative. As the people of Africa say today, they would like to be the creators and protagonists of their own political models and of their human and liberating development.

I now call on the representative of Guyana to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.5.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) group of countries at the United Nations, along with the African Group and other Member States sponsoring this text, to introduce for adoption today draft resolution A/63/L.5, entitled "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade".

The draft resolution before us today, which is essentially procedural in nature, seeks to address developments that have taken place since the adoption of resolution 62/122 last December. Two years ago, we acknowledged in this very Hall that slavery and the transatlantic slave trade represent one of the low points in the history of humanity. We recalled the forced removal of more than 18 million people, over a period of 500 years, from Africa to the Americas, including the Caribbean, the United States, Brazil and other parts of Latin America, as well as to Europe.

We recall that 25 March has been designated as an annual International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, beginning in 2008. In that context, on behalf of the States members of CARICOM, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the update provided in his report (A/63/213) on activities held earlier this year to commemorate the anniversary of the abolition of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. We look forward to collaborating with you, Mr. President, the Secretary-General and the Department of Public Information for similar commemorative activities on 25 March 2009.

The significance of that date is of historic proportions, since some 200 years ago on that date the final reward was granted to the abolition advocates when their untiring efforts led to the passage in the British Parliament of the act for the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in the British Empire, and subsequently the end of slavery throughout the world. The annual remembrance day, linked to the accomplishment of the abolitionists, will serve as a valuable complement to the existing UNESCO International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, whose date of 23 August aptly recognizes the historically important contribution of the slaves of Haiti themselves, who rose up in resistance to slavery and engineered their own emancipation.

In 2001, the international community gathered in South Africa for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances, which was held under the auspices of the United Nations and subsequently issued what is commonly referred to as the Durban Declaration. We view the permanent memorial project in a wider context, as a partial fulfilment of paragraph 101 of the Durban Declaration, which, inter alia, calls upon the international community to honour the memory of the victims of slavery. Consequently, we have sought in the third preambular paragraph to reaffirm the commitment made by States in 2001.

We cannot help but recall the horrific and dehumanizing nature of slavery and the slave trade, whereby the captives were forced into detention and transported as human cargo, packed into the foul holds of ships as mere chattels and taken across the Atlantic to the so-called New World. They were emasculated, sold and robbed of their culture, and their skins were

branded by hot irons and imprinted with the label of their owners. Those horrific images still jolt the conscience, recalling and reinforcing the depths of man's inhumanity to man. For that reason, we thought it fitting to stress in the fourth preambular paragraph the importance of educating and informing future generations about the causes, consequences and lessons of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery.

The permanent memorial will stand as an acknowledgement of one of the most horrific tragedies of modern history that is often forgotten. It will stand as a reminder of the struggle against and triumph over the enslavement and dehumanization of a single race over five centuries for economic gains and the legacy it has left behind; hence the theme "acknowledging the tragedy, considering the legacy, lest we forget". We regard the placement of that memorial at the United Nations as a significant symbol of what this Organization represents — the promotion and preservation of the dignity and worth of all human beings, which are principles central to the United Nations Charter.

In view of the importance of the permanent memorial to humankind and the universal nature of such a monument, we believe that it should be erected in a place of prominence that would be accessible not only to the representatives of this house, but to all who visit the United Nations. We have therefore sought to clarify the language used in the previous resolution, which referred to the halls of the United Nations. Indeed, it is the widely held view that a place of prominence at the United Nations, easily accessible to representatives, United Nations staff and visitors, such as the plaza at the visitors' entrance, would be a more appropriate location for a monument of such great significance. In such a setting, the memorial will truly be accessible to all people and all nations.

Through the draft resolution, the Assembly will endorse the establishment of the committee of interested States, referred to in operative paragraph 2, to oversee the permanent memorial project. The committee is being drawn from all geographical regions of the United Nations. Importantly, the States members of the Caribbean Community and the African Union are playing a primary role in advancing the work of the committee and Jamaica has already been elected to serve as its Chairman. Additionally, the committee, given its inclusive nature, collaborates with non-State partners, such as the Secretariat, UNESCO, the Schomburg Center and civil society representatives.

Mr. Siles Alvarado (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

A voluntary fund, the Permanent Memorial Fund, established in keeping with resolution 62/122, has been set up under the custody of the Permanent Mission of Jamaica towards the realization of the memorial. However, in the interest of further transparency and accountability, it is proposed that the wider committee oversee the Fund. At the same time, the committee is seeking to explore, with the Secretariat, methods of ensuring enhanced transparency and accountability for the management of the Fund in a manner that would be acceptable to all Member States.

In response to enquiries about the budgetary implications arising from the adoption of the draft resolution, let me say categorically that there are no such implications for the permanent memorial project. It is our hope that the permanent memorial will become a reality through the generous contributions given voluntarily by Member States, as well as any fund-raising activities that may be organized by the committee. On behalf of the group of CARICOM States, I wish therefore to acknowledge with appreciation contributions and pledges towards the Fund already received from Member States, while also encouraging Member States and other interested parties to join in that important effort.

We would also like to place on record our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, the Secretariat and members of the Committee for their invaluable support, technical advice and assistance towards the implementation of the permanent memorial project.

Racism, racial discrimination and prejudice continue to cast a destructive stain on societies across the globe, and the roots and linkages with the transatlantic slave trade and slavery are clearly established; hence, the call to action by States.

It is in that context that, in paragraph 6, we reiterate the request contained in resolution 61/19 of 28 November 2006 for Member States that have not already done so to develop educational programmes, including through school curricula, designed to educate and inculcate in future generations an understanding of the lessons, history and consequences of slavery and the slave trade.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General, which provides an update on the Secretariat's activities to establish, for the first time, an educational outreach programme to mobilize, inter alia, educational institutions and civil society on the subject of commemorating the transatlantic slave trade and slavery. We believe that this will help to address the ignorance and knowledge gap, primarily among young people, in understanding the impact and consequences of slavery and the slave trade. Through the draft resolution, the General Assembly would request that the Secretary-General, in collaboration with and building upon the work undertaken by UNESCO through the Slave Route Project, continue the outreach programme to inculcate future generations with an understanding of the causes, consequences and lessons of the transatlantic slave trade and to inform them of the dangers of racism and prejudice.

The General Assembly would, by its consensus adoption of this important draft resolution, recognize the continuing impact of slavery and the horrific transatlantic slave trade on the African diaspora and its descendants, many of whom are in the Assembly Hall today. That has added significance as we prepare to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights later this year. It will engage in a practical and deliberate educational outreach programme with a view to addressing the dangers of racism and prejudice that continue to threaten the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In conclusion, the CARICOM group of Member States sincerely thanks the many sponsors and supporters of the current draft resolution and now invites the General Assembly to give its unequivocal support to its adoption with a view to bringing to a successful conclusion the process begun in 2006 in this our United Nations.

Mr. Muita (Kenya): The African Group is pleased to render its support to the important draft resolution before us today (A/63/L.5) at a time when we are both introducing and taking action on it in the Assembly. At the outset, we wish to convey our sincerest appreciation to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) group of countries for the initiative and efforts that have allowed all of us to reflect on our past deeds, our amazing ability to endure and overcome immense adversity, and the collective action that led to the demise of the most immoral and dehumanizing aspect of history.

On behalf of the States members of the African Group, I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for the update provided in his report on activities held earlier this year to commemorate the anniversary of the abolition of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. We look forward to working with the President, the Secretary-General and the Department of Public Information on similar commemorative activities next year.

On 25 March 1807, Britain legally abolished the slave trade and formally brought to a close the most horrific experiences man has ever known. That action was thereafter separately replicated by other Powers of the time. Notwithstanding that seemingly noble action, slavery was tolerated, condoned and allowed to continue in practice a long time. Man continued to enslave fellow man, treating him like personal property and thereby robbing him of all his dignity. The process of fighting for rights and taking back human dignity was characterized by profound risk, danger and sacrifice. It took collective efforts and great courage to fight against and defeat slavery. With our discussion on this subject, humanity is turning a page on a very painful past indeed. Useful lessons are discernible from those actions, which took place in not so distant a past. Besides the abolitionists, the unsung heroes are the slaves themselves.

We face many challenges today. We can draw inspiration from those who rallied against the slave trade and slavery just over two centuries ago. Collective efforts worked before and we believe that they are the surest way to address our challenges. The draft resolution is proposing the construction of a permanent memorial at the United Nations as a permanent reminder of man's inhumanity to his fellow man and as an injunction against such a horrendous institution ever being allowed to manifest itself in our society again.

The permanent memorial dedicated to the victims of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery can never be an atonement for the wretched suffering of humankind, but is just a token of appreciation to all those heroes who stood steadfastly, who pitted their lives against injustice, who opposed slavery and fought for freedom, as well as those who fell victim to cruel and inhuman treatment meted out against them by unscrupulous

profiteers, slave masters and unjust societies. The permanent memorial will serve to remind us of the heroic actions of the slaves, abolitionists and the numerous unheralded men and women of conscience who stood up to be counted in the face of grave danger and adversity.

The permanent memorial will be a memory, a history, a journey through a difficult time, a reminder of the atrocities of the Middle Passage, the cruel transatlantic journey and the seasoning camps. The memorial will also be an educational resource and a statue of lifelong learning. It will be a reconstruction of the past in order to mould the future. It will be a constant reminder of the vulnerability of humanity.

The permanent memorial will also be a reminder of the challenges that we continue to face today. Vices such as racism, xenophobia and discrimination, all akin to slavery, have begun rearing their ugly heads again. There have been incidences of bias, incitement to hatred and hate crimes in our societies. We are called upon to firmly stand up to and reject any and all notions of supremacy or supremacist ideology. We have to guard against the danger of slipping back into barbarism.

By adopting the draft resolution, we shall point out the importance of gaining a better understanding of the slave trade and slavery in general. We shall be committing ourselves to ensuring that information relating to the slave trade and slavery is available and disseminated to all segments of society, particularly through institutions of learning, so that they can join in the efforts to promote a cohesive international society based on knowledge and understanding of our history. By encouraging learning about slavery, we shall reduce the danger of making the same mistakes in the future.

The construction of the permanent memorial will require resources and we invite the international community to join in the endeavour and donate generously so that we may preserve our memory. Those would be resources put to good use. I urge us to heed the wise words of the Nigerian Nobel Laureate Professor Wole Soyinka when he stated that "a people who do not preserve their memory are a people who have forfeited their history". Let us give new impetus to the words "never again".

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the African Group's support for the draft resolution and for the construction of a permanent memorial in honour of all the victims of the slave trade, the brave abolitionists and the collective international efforts that led to the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. I urge all Member States to support the adoption of the draft resolution.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representatives of Guyana on behalf of the 14 States Members of the Caribbean Community and of Kenya on behalf of the 54 members of the African Group of countries.

It is an honour and privilege for me to speak on agenda item 108, "Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade". It is a well known fact that my own region's history is deeply rooted in the legacy of slavery, having been colonized first by the Spanish in the 1500s. Thereafter, most Caribbean countries remained under British colonial rule for more than 300 years. During the colonial period, our region's ports witnessed the arrival of numerous vessels transporting hundreds of thousands of Africans across the Atlantic to fortify the labour-intensive market created by the then-ruling British plantocracy.

It took the international community almost 200 years to acknowledge slavery and the slave trade as crimes against humanity. We have been asked why we bother to rehash an event that happened so long ago. But for us, the people of the Caribbean and of Africa, 200 years is really not very long ago. As descendants of those who lived and died during those 500 years, it remains our solemn obligation to ensure that their memories are honoured and that their suffering is never forgotten.

It should also be recalled that among the most pernicious legacies of slavery and the slave trade is the existence of apartheid and racism, which remained entrenched in southern Africa until towards the end of the twentieth century. Those scourges were uprooted only thanks to the indomitable spirit and struggle of the peoples of the entire African continent to break free from the dehumanization and hardship which they faced.

Consequently, it is with a sense of duty and deep humility that we seek to honour the memories of our ancestors who were brought to the Caribbean region as a result of the transatlantic slave trade. We firmly believe that the permanent memorial that was

mentioned by the Chair of the Caribbean Community and endorsed by the General Assembly last year should be viewed as a tangible source of hope and a means of remembrance of the struggles to break free of the hardships faced under colonial rule.

I take this opportunity to express appreciation to the members of the committee that was established to oversee the permanent memorial project and for electing Jamaica as Chair and temporary custodian of the voluntary fund. We thank the committee for the confidence it has bestowed on us and we will strive to fulfil the objective of executing the project in the most effective and efficient manner. I make this point to highlight the fact that, with the adoption of the draft resolution before us today, we seek to broaden the latter responsibility so that the committee will oversee the fund while it seeks to explore with the Secretariat methods of ensuring enhanced transparency and accountability for its operation in a manner that would be acceptable to all Member States.

With members' indulgence, I also wish to express sincere appreciation for the kind generosity of the Governments of those countries that have already made donations to the Permanent Memorial Fund. We are thankful for the show of solidarity in acknowledging the legacy of this dark period of history. In that regard, I wish to publicly thank the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Belize, Botswana, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Haiti, Luxembourg, Mozambique, Namibia, Portugal, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Syria, Turkey and, of course, my own country, Jamaica. We envisage that other countries will follow in their footsteps in making contributions to the Permanent Fund.

In closing, I would also like to make special mention of those countries from which we have so far received pledges: Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain and, of course, the United Kingdom.

Finally, I took forward to collaborating with the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the Department of Public Information and other Member States in the preparatory activities to mark the annual commemorative event on 25 March in honour of the anniversary of the abolition of slavery and the slave trade.

Mrs. Núñez Mordoche (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The transatlantic African slave trade was one of the greatest tragedies in the history of humankind and the most serious violation of human rights ever committed in terms of its scale and duration. Between 1450 and 1850, some 12 million African men, women and children were torn from their homes, sold as slaves and forced to cross the Atlantic Ocean from their countries of origin to the American continent. Many millions more perished en route. For each slave transported and sold, three died. More than 60,000 voyages were necessary. Considered by many as the largest human deportation in history, the transatlantic slave trade had an irreversible effect on the enslaved African population because, with the exception of some small groups, millions of Africans were never able to return to their country of origin.

However, the crime of imposed deportation was not enough. The slave trade was accompanied by strong racist ideology. Black people were classified as inferior beings, frequently as animals. They were considered to have no rights under the law and were therefore treated legally as objects.

In Cuba, deep traces of that sordid chapter remain. During the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, approximately 1.3 million Africans were forcibly transported to Cuba to be enslaved on plantations and in services of various types. During the colonial period in our country, Africans and their descendants alike suffered the ravages of racism, discrimination, a total lack of rights and marginalization even after slavery was prohibited in the second half of the 1880s. Unfortunately, Cuba was not the only country in the American continent that was a victim of the transatlantic slave trade. Stories similar to Cuba's were re-enacted throughout nearly the entire American continent and the Antilles.

The so-called triangular slave trade was part and parcel of the bloody exploitation and impoverishment of the African continent and the cruel discrimination that African descendents in the western hemisphere suffered for years. The inhuman business of the slave trade was profitable only for the colonial metropoles that started, developed and maintained it over centuries. It had disastrous consequences for the economic development of the only affected areas, in particular in the African continent, which was plunged into several centuries of economic backwardness and political disorder that continued with the formal colonization of the so-called scramble for Africa of the nineteenth century.

Paradoxically, nowadays many purport to be unaware of, justify or, worse still, erase that sad chapter from our history. The opposition of the former colonial metropolises to any formula aimed at honouring an historical debt to those who endured slavery over centuries has become entrenched.

Those who amassed huge fortunes at the expense of the slaves' sweat and blood, and plunged our nations into the disastrous consequences of monoproduction and monocrop economies cannot wash their hands now of their dark past by means of a self-induced historical amnesia in the midst of a neoliberal globalization whereby the rich — the very same as those of times past — have grown ever richer and our nations have been reduced to exclusion and impoverishment.

Cuba attaches great importance to the United Nations endeavours to combat racism and xenophobia, and particularly the actions agreed at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa, in August and September 2001, to focus due attention on the needs of the victims of slavery, the slave trade, servitude imposed on indigenous peoples and colonialism, as well as their descendants.

Despite being subject to a tight economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States Government for more than four decades, Cuba has developed and will continue to develop cooperation programmes with African, Caribbean and other third world sister nations as part of a joint effort to reverse the consequences of the slave trade and other sad moments of colonialism and neocolonialism.

We will continue to insist that slavery and the transatlantic slave trade be declared crimes against humanity and that the descendants of the victims of those criminal practices, colonialism and the genocidal exploitation of indigenous peoples be given the reparations and compensation they deserve as an outstanding measure of historical justice.

The commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade is also an opportunity to remember contemporary forms of slavery: trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, forced labour in slave conditions and the use of children in international drug trafficking. Those forms continue to flourish today, mostly as the result of discrimination, social exclusion and vulnerability, which are all exacerbated by poverty. The international community must be aware of that fact. Their eradication is a goal for all of us.

Mr. Chabar (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, and as this is the first time I take the floor in the plenary, allow me to congratulate Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann on his accession to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session and on the initiatives he has undertaken to mobilize Member States to confront the challenges of today. His wisdom and his erudition will be precious assets in uniting and bringing together the international community on its path towards a safer, fairer and more human world. He may rest assured of our delegation's support.

The Kingdom of Morocco aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Kenya on behalf of the African Group, and wishes to add the following comments.

Today, commemoration and remembrance combine as the General Assembly prepares to adopt a beacon draft resolution at the initiative of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the creation of a permanent memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes that decision, whereby the international community speaks in one voice against collective amnesia regarding one of the most sinister episodes of human history during which, over four centuries, millions of Africans were deported to the new world and reduced to slavery, a lucrative trade that contributed to the development of the Americas and Europe. According to estimates, the different phases of the transatlantic slave trade deprived 25 to 30 million individuals of their freedom, without counting the 17 million who died on ships plying the Atlantic Ocean.

On this solemn occasion, we remember with emotion the tenacious struggle of abolitionists whose names remain indelibly etched in the stone of the pantheon of history: Toussaint Louverture, Frederick Douglass, William Wilberforce, Harriet Tubman and Victor Schoelcher.

The creation of a permanent memorial to the victims of slavery will offer States Members and staff of and visitors to the United Nations a place and a symbol that invites them to reflect on the historical roots, the modus operandi and the consequences of the

inexcusable tragedy of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

Beyond the duty of remembrance, it is fundamental to raise awareness of the upheavals that the trade of souls brought upon the various people concerned. The slave trade, as a large-scale forced migration, also led to cultural exchanges that deeply marked habits, beliefs, social relations and knowledge on several continents.

The cultural footprint of the victims of slavery and the slave trade connects fields as varied as knowledge and the arts, oral patrimony, musical genres, philosophy and literature. Slaves were necessarily the vectors of a civilizational legacy that resulted in the fusion of cultures from Europe, Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean and the Americas.

The Kingdom of Morocco, by commemorating "the greatest tragedy of human history in scale and duration", in the words of the French historian Jean-Michel Deveau, wishes to readdress the intellectual legitimization of slavery and its ideological basis in the doctrinal formulation of anti-black identity and its legal organization through the Code Noir of 1685.

The international community has a sacred duty to deconstruct racial prejudice and to fight ideologies of hatred of the other and intolerance. Of course, those objectives involve the promotion of dialogue between cultures, religions and, more broadly speaking, civilizations. Thus, Morocco participates actively in a number of initiatives, including the Alliance of Civilizations, and untiringly works to promote internally and internationally such values as tolerance, dialogue and respect for others.

Such values are not accidental; they are the result of the millennial history of Morocco, which embodies overlapping and enmeshing African, Arab, European and Andalusian identities.

We invite all States to contribute to the financing of the memorial, which we wish to see serve as a permanent testimony to our rejection of the exploitation of the other, racism and historical amnesia. As an African State, the Kingdom of Morocco calls for a tightening of the bonds between Africa and its diaspora and for the promotion of a relaxation of tensions and reconciliation with others, through an objective and uncompromising reflection on the impact of this tragedy on Africans and their transatlantic descendants.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Kenya on behalf of the African Group in support of draft resolution A/63/L.5, which is before the Assembly.

Ghana attaches great importance to this draft resolution and is pleased to be a part of this initiative which acknowledges one of the worst violations of human rights in the history of humanity: the enslavement and dehumanization of people of African descent over hundreds of years.

We express our appreciation to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) for leading the initiative to erect in a place of prominence in the corridors of the United Nations a permanent memorial in honour of those sons and daughters of Africa who perished in the Middle Passage, in resistance to slavery or as a result of the indignities and alienation they suffered in the New World. In this regard, we once again pledge our support for the establishment of a permanent memorial fund to bring the project to fruition.

The memorial will make a significant contribution towards our global efforts to carry out the action plan adopted in 2001 at the Durban Anti-Racism Conference aimed at eradicating the scourge of racism, xenophobia and discrimination. Indeed, the placement of this monument at the United Nations will reaffirm and attest to what our noble Organization stands for: the promotion, protection and preservation of the dignity and worth of all peoples.

We should all follow up to ensure that the necessary resources for effective fulfilment of this project are made available through our generous contributions so that the preparations may proceed as planned.

In conclusion, Ghana wishes to reiterate its support for this important draft resolution.

Mr. McMahan (United States of America): This debate is indeed a fitting reminder of a despicable practice that devalued human life and dignity. After a civil war that sought to reconcile the words and concepts that gave birth to our republic with a brutal reality of a largely agrarian society fuelled by the blood and sweat of human bondage, the thirteenth amendment to the United States Constitution was

adopted on 6 December 1865, officially abolishing slavery in the United States of America.

While the transatlantic slave trade ended centuries ago, a contemporary form of slavery thrives today under a different name: trafficking in persons, or human trafficking. Like the early slave traders, today's traffickers use many of the same tools: kidnapping, fraud, threats and beatings, all aimed, just as in earlier centuries, at forcing men, women and children into labour and sexual exploitation.

Trafficking is a crime that respects no borders. Each year, an estimated 800,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders, and millions of others are trafficked within their own countries. And in virtually every country around the world, including the United States, men, women and children are held in domestic servitude, forcibly exploited for commercial sex and coerced to work in factories and sweatshops. In some countries, children are forcibly recruited as soldiers. These forms of human trafficking are in fact modern-day slavery.

The United States has taken a broad range of actions to halt these practices, because we strongly believe it is the right thing to do. We remain committed to recognizing the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, commemorating its victims and reversing its harms. We are proud to be in a position to co-sponsor the draft General Assembly resolution regarding a permanent memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, which we are about to adopt.

Mr. Rogachev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, allow me to extend the Russian Federation's gratitude to the delegations of the countries of the Caribbean Basin for their draft resolution entitled, "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade" (A/63/L.5), which the Russian Federation co-sponsors. We consider the attention devoted to this problem by the United Nations to be entirely justified.

As is well known, our Organization was born in response to the horrors that afflicted the world during the years of the Second World War. And even though that war and the transatlantic slave trade were separated by 150 years, the underlying causes of those two historic events are very similar. Here we are referring to a perverted concept that claims that one group is allegedly superior to another. It seems especially important to us that the draft resolution include provisions regarding the raising of awareness about the causes and consequences of the slave trade and the lessons to be drawn from its legacy. We are convinced that the current generation and those to come should not forget about this tragic chapter of humankind's history.

It is not often that the United Nations addresses historical wrongs. Indeed, Member States focus first and foremost on the most pressing and current problems. Here, however, we have an example of a case where a historical event is of a global scale; where its effects can be seen on the course of humankind's history and it will continue to have a clear impact on our present and future.

Ms. Bethel (Bahamas): I would like first of all to align myself with the statement made by Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) member States. It was just about two years ago that the CARICOM member States, with the proud co-sponsorship of numerous countries, including those from our ancestral home Africa, ushered through the General Assembly the resolution that established the basis for the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. The adoption of that resolution was indeed historic and, as was noted at the time, its mission would be to erect a bridge spanning two hundred years across the seas and lands of Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.

The legacy of the slave trade highlights, among other things, the capacity in all of us to take principled action, to speak out against injustice and to conquer victimization by living, surviving, advancing and forgiving, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Looking at the lives of the people enslaved for centuries in the Americas and the Caribbean teaches us much about the capacity of human beings to strive and be hopeful, even under the most dehumanizing conditions. The triumph over slavery is a testimony to the human spirit, which can emerge from the harshest victimization, exploitation and oppression, with remarkable joy, creativity and inventiveness.

The indelible etchings of Africa on every aspect of our life in the Caribbean are the bedrock of our sustenance as a people and will always be the source of our creativity and perseverance. On the stage of

history, ours has not always been a joyful and triumphant lot, and yet we participate here today in this world body with utmost pride and determination, the same pride and dogged determination that served to ensure the survival of our forebears even under the most cruel and dire of circumstances. The depths of their humanity, the unyielding core of their spiritual home, have become the wellspring of our undying vision of a peaceful world that is at once hopeful, diverse, tolerant and forward looking — essential elements that must underpin the future in order to ensure the survival of humankind.

Last year, in order to help inculcate in future generations knowledge about the causes, consequences and lessons of slavery, as well as to inform of the dangers of racism and prejudice, the sixty-second session of the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/122, designating 25 March as an annual International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Our watchword must forever be, lest we forget.

For the same compelling reasons, the Bahamas is greatly heartened by the progress made in the ongoing campaign to establish a permanent memorial here at the United Nations to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, in acknowledgement of that tragedy and in consideration of its legacy. As a sponsor of draft resolution A/63/L.5, we wish to express our appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Jamaica for the pivotal role it has played in moving the process forward, to reiterate our sincere appreciation to all those who have contributed to that undertaking and to express our hope that many more will support that noble and worthy project. I am pleased to report that the Government of the Bahamas has made a pledge to the fund that will be forthcoming in short order.

Mr. Vishvjit P. Singh (India): I am pleased to participate in the general discussion on the agenda item entitled "Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade". I thank the Member States of the Caribbean region for bringing that important item on to the agenda of the General Assembly. I firmly support the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean States.

Former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru called slavery and the transatlantic slave trade an infinite tragedy. In the Swahili language, it is sometimes referred to as *Maafa*, meaning holocaust or great disaster. It is often overlooked that the tragic crime of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery extended over more than five centuries. Scholars have estimated that during that period the Atlantic slave trade led to the loss of at least 50 million potential African lives. Had that not happened, Africa's population in 1850 would have been 100 million instead of 50 million. The horror of the Middle Passage is unique; during which, without food and basic amenities, at least one sixth of those transported died in loneliness, darkness and trauma.

India shares the pain and suffering of the affected countries. We remember our own tragedy of colonialism and the export of indentured labour. The racism that was an inevitable dimension of slavery became part of the rationale for colonialism. There was a boomerang effect. Nazism was simply that racism applied within Europe. As the great Caribbean poet Césaire said, the poison was slowly distilled into the veins of Europe, and Nazism, before engulfing the whole edifice of Western civilization in its reddened waters, had oozed and trickled from every crack.

We welcome the resolution adopted by the General Assembly two years ago on the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and the General Assembly's decision to commemorate that in the United Nations by convening a special meeting of the General Assembly on 26 March 2007. I would also like to welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/63/213) on the programme of educational outreach on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery.

We are honoured to co-sponsor this year's draft resolution entitled "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade". A permanent memorial will symbolize that colossal tragedy and remain before our eyes as a permanent remembrance to stir us to thought and action. We join the Caribbean Community countries in requesting that Member States contribute to that memorial and adopt that draft resolution.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

(*spoke in English*)

Before proceeding to take action on draft resolution A/63/L.5, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the

following countries have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Croatia, Fiji, Finland, France, Greece, Honduras, Iraq, Japan, Lichtenstein, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Serbia, Slovenia, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the United States of America and Uruguay.

(spoke in Spanish)

I now call on the representative of Cape Verde on a point of order.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde) *(spoke in French)*: The draft resolution that we are about to adopt is an important draft resolution, as we have seen from the statements of the various representatives who took the floor on this issue.

Personally, I cannot understand that all Africa can be represented only by this month's Chairman of our Group. I request that all the States of Africa be listed as sponsors of the draft resolution, and not only be represented by the Chairman of the African Group. I do not understand the decision that has led to this draft resolution, which is of fundamental importance to all Africa, being limited to being sponsored only by this month's Chairman of the African Group.

The Acting President: The Assembly takes note of the clarification made by the representative of Cape Verde.

(spoke in Spanish)

The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/63/L.5, entitled "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.5?

Draft resolution A/63/L.5 was adopted (resolution 63/5)

The Acting President *(spoke in Spanish)*: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 108?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President in the Chair

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: May I inform members that consideration of agenda item 41 entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS", scheduled for Monday, 3 November 2008, has been deferred to a subsequent date that will be announced in due course. May I also bring to the attention of members that document A/INF/63/4/Rev.1 has been published. It contains a revised version of the General Assembly programme of work and the schedule for plenary meetings for the period from 22 October to December 2008.

I should also like to remind members that the lists of speakers for items listed in document A/INF/63/4/Rev.1 are open.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.30

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

30th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 22 October 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 103

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

Letter dated 17 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/63/493)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will first proceed to a by-election to elect a member of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with rule 140 of the rules of procedure.

In this connection, I would first like to draw the attention of members to document A/63/493, containing a letter dated 17 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations. In his letter, the Permanent Representative announces that Iceland would like to relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council at the end of the year 2008 for the remainder of its term in favour of Norway. As a result, a vacancy will occur and a new member must therefore be elected to fill the unexpired term of office of Iceland, commencing on 1 January 2009 and expiring on 31 December 2010.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, and taking into account that the vacancy will occur from among the Western European and other States, the new member should therefore be elected from that region.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the candidate that receives the greatest number of votes by a two-thirds majority of Members present and voting will be declared elected. May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. We shall now proceed accordingly.

I should like to inform Members that, as of 1 January 2009, the following States from the Group of Western European and other States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The names of those seven States should therefore not appear on the ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

08-56457 (E)

Allow me to remind Members that they are now voting in the by-election for one seat for the Western European and other States. The election of the 18 members of the Council will take place immediately following this by-election.

Ballot papers will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the name of the State for which they wish to vote. A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains the name of more than one Member State from the relevant region for the one vacant seat assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if the name of the Member State on that ballot does not belong to the relevant region.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Hoxha (Albania), Ms. Llagostera-Saludes (Andorra), Ms. Corti (Argentina), Mr. Barria (Panama), Ms. Macalintal (Philippines), Mrs. Adams (Vanuatu) and Mrs. Kondolo (Zambia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

Ms. Ochir (Mongolia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B – Western European and Other States
(1 seat)

Number of ballot papers:	182
Number of invalid ballots:	4
Number of valid ballots:	178
Abstentions:	8
Number of Members voting:	170
Required two-thirds majority:	114
Number of votes obtained:	
Norway	154
France	4
Germany	3
Greece	3
Portugal	3
Liechtenstein	1
Spain	1
Sweden	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Norway has thus been elected a member of the Economic and Social Council for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2009 and ending on 31 December 2010.

I congratulate Norway on having been elected a member of the Economic and Social Council.

The General Assembly will next turn to the election of 18 members of the Economic and Social Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2008.

The 18 outgoing members are: Angola, Austria, Benin, Cuba, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Japan, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Mauritania, Paraguay, Portugal, Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka. Pursuant to rule 146 of the rules of procedure, these countries are eligible for immediate re-election.

Members will recall that Iceland relinquished its seat on the Economic and Social Council, effective 1 January 2009, and that Norway has just been elected to fill that vacancy.

Consequently, as of 1 January 2009, the following States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Algeria, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Cameroon, Cape Verde, China, the Congo, El Salvador, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mozambique, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Niger, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Somalia, the Sudan, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay. The names of these 36 States should therefore not appear on the ballots.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, and taking into account the number of States that will remain members of the Council after 1 January 2009, the 18 members should be elected as follows: five from African States, three from Asian States, one from Eastern European States, four from Latin American and Caribbean States and five from Western European and other States. The ballot papers reflect this pattern.

I should like to inform the Assembly that those candidates, their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, who receive a two-thirds majority and the greatest number of votes by Members present

and voting, will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates who have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot, and there shall be no nominations.

Regarding candidatures of the respective regional Groups, the Secretariat has been informed that for the five vacant seats from among the African States, the Group has endorsed five candidates: Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, Morocco and Namibia. For the three vacant seats from among the Asian States, the Group has endorsed three candidates: India, Japan and Saudi Arabia. For the one vacant seat from among the Eastern European States, the Group has endorsed Estonia. For the four vacant seats from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, the Group has endorsed four candidates: Guatemala, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. For the five vacant seats from among the Western European and other States, the Group has endorsed five candidates: France, Germany, Greece, Liechtenstein and Portugal.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind Members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked A, B, C, D and E will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote.

A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if none of the names of the Member States on that ballot belongs to the relevant region. If a ballot paper of a region contains some of the names of the Member States that do not belong to that region, the ballot remains valid but only the names of the Member States that belong to the relevant region will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the Acting President, Mr. Hoxha (Albania), Ms. Llagostera-Saludes (Andorra), Ms. Corti (Argentina), Ms. Enosse (Mozambique), Mr. Barria (Panama), Mrs. Macalintal (Philippines), Mrs. Adams (Vanuatu) and Mrs. Kondolo (Zambia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 12.35 p.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African States (5 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	184
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	184
Abstentions:	1
Number of Members voting:	183
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Côte d'Ivoire	179
Namibia	179
Mauritius	178
Guinea-Bissau	177
Morocco	174

Group B — Asian States (3 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	184
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	184
Abstentions:	0
Number of Members voting:	184
Required two-thirds majority:	123
Number of votes obtained:	
Saudi Arabia	180
India	179
Japan	177

Group C — Eastern European States (1 seat)

Number of ballot papers:	184
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	184
Abstentions:	7

Number of Members voting:	177
Required two-thirds majority:	118
Number of votes obtained:	
Estonia	177

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States (4 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	184
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	184
Abstentions:	0
Number of Members voting:	184
Required two-thirds majority:	123
Number of votes obtained:	
Guatemala	180
Saint Kitts and Nevis	180
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	177
Peru	176
Mexico	2
Haiti	1

Group E — Western European and other States (5 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	184
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	184
Abstentions:	1
Number of Members voting:	183
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Portugal	179
Germany	178
Greece	177
Liechtenstein	170
France	168
Spain	2
Turkey	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority of Members present and voting, the following 18 States have thus been elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2009: Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, India, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Peru, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

I congratulate the States which have been elected members of the Economic and Social Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 103.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.31

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

31st plenary meeting
Monday, 27 October 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 80

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/276)

Draft resolution (A/63/L.6)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to introduce the report of the Agency for 2007, which has been transmitted to the General Assembly by the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/63/276.

Mr. ElBaradei (International Atomic Energy Agency): We meet at a time of heightened anxiety and insecurity in the world. The global financial crisis is hitting rich and poor countries alike, but the poorest of the poor — the so-called bottom billion — are particularly vulnerable. Concern about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the possibility of extremist groups getting hold of nuclear or radioactive material has not diminished in the 12 months since I last spoke to the General Assembly.

The work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is at the nexus of development and security. In that context, I will give the Assembly an update on the Agency's work over the past year and highlight some of the challenges that need to be addressed.

The Agency's work in technical cooperation is sometimes seen — wrongly — as an adjunct to our real work in nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. That is unfortunate. Technical cooperation should not be seen as part of a political balance between the development and other activities of the Agency. Our role as a development agency is as important as anything else we do. To that end, we have established effective partnerships with agencies such as the World Health Organization and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. Thanks to those partnerships, many thousands of people receive radiation therapy for cancer, grow higher-yielding food crops and have access to clean drinking water.

In the past year, the surge in global food prices has pushed millions of people deeper into poverty and hunger. That clearly increases the importance of the work done by the IAEA to boost food supplies and combat pests and animal diseases. In some areas, the IAEA role is unique. For example, the best technology for mapping water resources cannot be deployed without the IAEA because it involves nuclear techniques.

A recent World Bank report showed that some 1.4 billion people in the developing world live on less than $1.25 per day. The number of poor people in sub-Saharan Africa has nearly doubled since 1981 to around 380 million. The international community has a responsibility to ensure that those people and others like them are not cut off from technologies that will accelerate economic development and help to ensure that their basic needs are met.

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08-56886 (E)

Energy is the engine of development. Nearly every aspect of development requires reliable access to modern energy services. The global energy imbalance remains dramatic. The developed countries that make up the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development consume electricity on average at a per capita rate of 8,600 kilowatt-hours per year — roughly 170 times more than is consumed in Africa. It is understandable that many developing countries, therefore, should see nuclear power as a key source of the energy they need to lift their people out of poverty.

Nuclear power is undergoing something of a renaissance. That is a remarkable development. Just 10 years ago, nuclear power had stopped growing in the developed countries and its future globally looked uncertain as fears about safety were predominant. Now it is seen as offering part of the solution to surging global demand for energy, uncertainty about energy supply and concern about climate change. In the past two years, some 50 Member States have expressed interest in considering the possible introduction of nuclear power and asked for Agency support. Twelve of those countries are actively preparing to introduce nuclear power. Increased demand for assistance has been particularly strong from developing countries.

There are now 439 nuclear power reactors operating in 30 countries and the number of new plants under construction stands at 36. The IAEA advises countries considering the introduction of nuclear power, helping them to identify their options and the best energy mix for them. To ensure that newcomers use nuclear energy efficiently, safely, securely and with minimal proliferation risk, we impress upon them the need to plan properly, to build the human resources and infrastructure, to establish independent and effective regulators and to adhere to international safety, security and non-proliferation instruments. We offer advice in drafting national nuclear legislation and we train regulators and operators.

Above all, we stress that the primary responsibility to ensure safety and security lies with the countries concerned. However, we also make the companies and countries that supply the equipment and expertise aware of their responsibility. That is because failures of either safety or security can have consequences stretching well beyond national borders, as the Chernobyl accident demonstrated. Recipients and suppliers alike of nuclear technology owe a duty of care to the world at large.

Overall, safety is much better than it was 10 years ago, but vulnerabilities remain. We can never be complacent about safety. A single nuclear accident anywhere in the world could undermine the future of nuclear energy everywhere, so it is in all our interests to ensure that the highest safety standards be upheld everywhere.

One implication of a nuclear renaissance is the spread of nuclear material to many more countries. That naturally increases the risk that nuclear material could be diverted to make nuclear weapons. It is worth noting that countries that master uranium enrichment and plutonium separation become de facto nuclear-weapons-capable States. That means they have the ability to develop nuclear weapons in a very short time if they walked out of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), or managed to do so in a clandestine manner. That is clearly too narrow a margin of security. Those countries may genuinely have no intention today of ever making nuclear weapons, but that can change in a short time if their perception of the risks to their national security changes. And as we know, security perceptions can change very rapidly.

That is why we need to think seriously about some form of multinational control over the fuel cycle. It should provide assurance that every country that wants nuclear energy and is in compliance with its safeguards obligations has guaranteed access to a supply of nuclear fuel that will not be interrupted for political reasons. I first made that proposal five years ago. Several ideas have been put forward since then on developing a new, multilateral framework for the nuclear fuel cycle. That could be done, obviously, in different ways, but, I believe that any such framework must be global and non-discriminatory.

The ideal scenario, in my opinion, would be to start with a nuclear fuel bank under IAEA auspices. Then we should agree that all new enrichment and reprocessing activities should be placed exclusively under multilateral control. Ultimately, all existing facilities should also be converted from national to multilateral control. That is a bold agenda and it is clearly not going to happen overnight, but bold measures, including controlling the spread of sensitive nuclear technology, are vital if we are ever going to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons and succeed in eliminating them altogether. However, make no mistake — any mechanism that smacks of inequality or dependency will never get off the ground.

The possibility of terrorists obtaining nuclear or other radioactive material remains a grave threat. The number of incidents reported to the Agency involving the theft or loss of nuclear or radioactive material is disturbingly high — nearly 250 in the year to June 2008 alone. Equally troubling is the fact that much of that material is not subsequently recovered. Sometimes material is found which had not been reported missing. The Agency helps countries improve their border controls, strengthen the physical protection of nuclear material and radioactive sources, and enhance nuclear security at major public events, such as the Beijing Olympic Games this summer.

Effective nuclear verification requires four essential elements: adequate legal authority, state-of-the-art technology, timely access to all relevant information, and sufficient human and financial resources. Despite some progress, we still have shortcomings in all four areas. With respect to legal authority, it has been over 10 years since the Model Additional Protocol was approved by the IAEA Board of Governors. Of the 163 States with safeguards agreements, only 88 now have additional protocols in force — not much more than half.

It is also disconcerting that 30 States party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have not even brought into force their required comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency. As I have said repeatedly, without safeguards agreements, the Agency cannot provide any assurance about a State's nuclear activities, and without additional protocols we cannot provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities.

Concerning the technological aspect of our work, to take just one example, we remain uncomfortably dependent in our verification work on satellite imagery and environmental sampling analysis provided by Member States. We clearly need a minimum independent capability to ensure our credibility.

Earlier this month, the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea briefly withheld access to the Yongbyon nuclear facilities from our inspectors, who had been monitoring and verifying the shutdown of the facilities. Access was subsequently restored following an agreement between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on a verification protocol. I naturally still hope that conditions can be created for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the NPT soon and for the resumption by the Agency of comprehensive safeguards.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Six years have elapsed since the Agency began working to clarify Iran's nuclear programme. Substantial progress has been made under a workplan agreed with Iran to clarify outstanding issues, including, importantly, the nature of Iran's enrichment activities. The Agency has been able to continue to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran.

However, I regret that we are still not in a position to achieve full clarity regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran. That is because the Agency has not been able to make substantive progress on the alleged studies and associated questions relevant to possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme.

I reiterate that the Agency does not in any way seek to pry into Iran's conventional or missile-related military activities. Our focus is clearly on nuclear material and activities. I am confident that arrangements can be developed which will enable the Agency to clarify the remaining issues while ensuring that Iran's legitimate right to protect the confidentiality of sensitive information and activities is respected. I therefore urge Iran to implement all the transparency measures required to build confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme at an early date. That will be good for Iran, good for the Middle East region and good for the world.

I have often expressed concern that the Agency lacks sufficient legal authority and adequate resources to do its job properly. Last year, I appointed an independent Commission of Eminent Persons to examine our work and make recommendations for the future of the Agency up to 2020 and beyond. The Commission, chaired by the former President of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo, produced its report earlier this year. Its recommendations make compelling reading. I will highlight a few of them.

First, the Commission says that the Agency, working with supplier and donor States, should help "newcomer" States to put in place the necessary infrastructure to launch nuclear energy programmes

safely, securely and peacefully. The Agency should also give high priority to establishing multilateral fuel cycle arrangements, covering everything from assurance of supply of nuclear fuel to waste disposal.

Secondly, the Commission says our Technical Cooperation Programme, focusing on using nuclear applications in food and agriculture, human health and natural resources, needs to be significantly expanded. Technical cooperation funds continue to lag well behind the pressing needs of developing countries.

Thirdly, in order to help address the threat of nuclear terrorism, the Commission urges Member States to negotiate binding agreements — not voluntary, as at present — to set effective global nuclear security standards and to give the Agency the resources and authority to help ensure they are implemented.

Fourthly, the Commission proposes that the Agency should lead an international effort to establish a global nuclear safety network, also based on binding agreements. Countries should submit to mandatory international nuclear safety peer reviews.

Fifthly, the Agency's safeguards activities should be strengthened. That means better tools, more human and financial resources, as well as more legal authority. On safeguards, I should note that nuclear disarmament, the core of the NPT, has been on the back burner for far too long. As the Commission says, "States must recommit to the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons". The Commission notes that, naturally, the IAEA is not the lead agency for nuclear disarmament, but it rightly points out that "progress towards disarmament, or the lack of it, deeply affects the IAEA's non-proliferation mission".

The sums of money proposed by the Commission of Eminent Persons for measures to enhance the Agency's effectiveness are very modest. But this is not just about money. The Agency does not work in a vacuum. Political commitment to the goals of the Agency needs to be renewed at the highest level to encourage the transfer of nuclear technology to the developing world, to enhance safety and security, to strengthen non-proliferation and, naturally, to accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament.

Furthermore, the problems facing the world in the nuclear arena are plain for all of us to see. The Agency can do much to address them if given the authority, technology and resources. Much more than the future of the Agency is at stake. We are talking about international development and security, and ultimately about the sort of world we want to leave to our children.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.6.

Mr. Benmihidi (Algeria): Allow me at the outset to welcome Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to extend to him, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, our sincere thanks for the introduction of the annual report of the work of the Agency for 2007 and for the valuable information he provided on the activities of the Agency during the period covered.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work of Mr. ElBaradei at the head of the Agency and to pay tribute to the tireless efforts he has deployed during his mandate and to the actions he has conducted, in particular, those aiming at achieving the goals and aspirations of all Member States in promoting the principle of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Algerian delegation is deeply honoured to hold the chairmanship of the Agency's Board of Governors for this year. In that capacity, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.6. I would thank all sponsors listed in that document and in the addendum, which will be issued later. I would also like to say that the list of sponsors is still open.

The draft resolution submitted for the Assembly's consideration reflects a broad consensus among the member States of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), reached during earlier consultations in Vienna. It is a simple, concise and factual text based on resolution 62/2, which the Assembly adopted by consensus at its sixty-second session. The proposed resolution takes note of the annual report of the IAEA and the resolutions adopted by the Agency's General Conference, held in Vienna from 29 September to 4 October 2008. It reaffirms the Assembly's strong support for the indispensable role of the Agency in encouraging the development and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful uses and in technology transfer to developing countries, as well as in nuclear safety, verification and security. It also appeals to

Member States to continue to support the work of the Agency.

It is my hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution without a vote, as it did in its previous session.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and Croatia and Albania. The European Union would like to congratulate the Secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, its Director General, for the Agency's excellent work in the course of the past year. We would also like to thank the Director General for his report on the activities of the IAEA in 2008.

The European Union member States are pleased with the outcome of the 52nd General Conference of the IAEA, held in Vienna from 29 September to 4 October 2008, particularly with the resolutions and decisions that were adopted there.

As in the past, the European Union has co-sponsored the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA (A/63/L.6) and we support its content. The draft resolution, co-sponsored by more 41 countries, reflects a broad agreement among the member States of the IAEA. We sincerely praise the efforts made by the Chair of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, and we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as was the case last year.

The three pillars of the IAEA Statute — verification, safety and nuclear applications — are more topical than ever, with nuclear proliferation building up throughout the world. As a result, the European Union attaches great importance to the content of those pillars, because they contribute significantly to promoting peace and security in the world.

The European Union reaffirms its full support for the work carried out by the Agency in serving the objectives of peaceful nuclear cooperation and nuclear safety. The IAEA remains the best qualified forum to ensure responsible use of the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We also acknowledge that it plays a crucial role in the field of nuclear verification at the global level. That role is all the more vital, as the world is currently facing very disturbing proliferation crises.

With respect to nuclear safety, we would like to mention once again the Agency's Nuclear Security Fund, which the European Union consistently supports. We invite all States to commit to contribute to that Fund without delay.

The general safeguards agreements and additional protocols of the Agency constitute the standard in the area of verification. The European Union believes that they are prerequisites to an effective and credible safeguards system. All member States of the IAEA must honour all their obligations with respect to those safeguards agreements.

The European Union is also working to make the additional protocol a condition for the export of nuclear materials. Additional protocols have been in force since May 2004 in all member States of the European Union. We urge all States that have not yet done so to ratify that protocol without delay. Adhering to that instrument is, indeed, one of the crucial ways to verify that States parties have respected their obligations under article III, of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Equally, we call on all States that have not yet done so to sign and implement without delay their respective safeguards agreements and additional protocols, because those two instruments strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. They contribute to the safety of all States and increase the confidence necessary for international cooperation with a view to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In that regard, the European Union is pleased that implementation of the additional protocol and transparency measures that go beyond that instrument has allowed the IAEA to conclude that there are no longer any pending issues concerning verification in Libya and that inspections there can continue routinely.

Through our joint action within the framework of the European Union's collective security and foreign policy, we support the Agency's nuclear verification and safety activities. We also support the strengthening of legislative competence and national regulations for the implementation of international instruments on nuclear safety and on verification of nuclear materials and other radioactive matter.

Strengthening the ability of States to detect and fight the illicit trade in nuclear materials and other radioactive matter is another significant area of cooperation between the European Union and the Agency. The safety and security of radioactive sources

and the role of the Code of Conduct adopted by the General Conference of the Agency in 2003 are of particular importance to us all. That is why the European Union has made a commitment to respect the Code, in accordance with the European directive on the control of high-activity sealed radioactive sources and orphan sources. The European Union urges all countries to declare their willingness to respect the Code and to implement the instructions for the import and export of radioactive sources.

The Agency continues to play a fundamental role in the global fight against nuclear terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons. It is important for the members of the Agency to recognize the true value of its impartial expertise.

The European Union regrets that more than 100 States have yet to sign additional protocols and to implement them. We urge those States to do so without delay.

The Agency must continue to contribute resolutely to reducing all risks linked to nuclear activity, both from the point of view of safety and the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. In that regard, the European Union believes that it is time to develop practical measures with respect to multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle. Balanced multilateral mechanisms would significantly contribute to meeting the concerns of beneficiary countries concerning the safety of supply by facilitating access to nuclear fuel and associated services, by reducing the need to invest in complex and expensive cycle technologies and by reducing concerns with respect to nuclear proliferation and safety.

Additionally, the EU is currently carefully considering the possibility of making a financial contribution to the ambitious nuclear fuel bank project under the auspices of IAEA. The EU would like to take this opportunity to thank the Agency for its efforts in creating a more peaceful and safer world and would like to reaffirm its full support. It is our great pleasure to once again this year sponsor the draft resolution on the Agency's report.

Mr. De Macedo Soares (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) member and associated States: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

MERCOSUR member and associated States would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, for his presence and his presentation of the main aspects of the Agency's activities. We would like to thank the Algerian delegation for its presentation of the draft resolution (A/63/L.6) on the Agency's report. We would also like to express our satisfaction with the successful conclusion of the Presidency of the Board of Governors by Chile, one of the MERCOSUR member and associated States.

The IAEA constitutes a fundamental multilateral forum dedicated to the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Our countries highly appreciate the Agency and the efforts undertaken to define its future activities. In this connection, MERCOSUR member and associated States would like to thank the Director General for the creation of the Commission of Eminent Persons, charged with the task of analysing the evolution of the needs and circumstances that will affect the work and functions of the Agency until 2020 and beyond.

The Commission constitutes a valuable initiative that can contribute to a better understanding of the future challenges of the Agency and the issues that will need to be discussed by member States, which continue to be the ones responsible for determining the priorities of the Agency's future activities.

The report tackles issues of different nature and complexity, and its suggestions will undoubtedly be of great use in the analysis and discussions among member States about the role of the Agency until 2020. We take note of the increasing importance attributed by the Agency's report to its safeguards activities. We consider that such activities constitute one of the statutory pillars and should not serve to weaken the promotional functions of the Agency.

MERCOSUR member and associated States are concerned about compliance by all States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) with their obligations in the fields of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this context, we underline the inalienable right of States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with article IV of the NPT.

Allow me to stress that any intent to redefine the delicate balance of rights and obligations contained in the Treaty, and, in so doing, to question the legitimacy of member States' aspirations to technological development for exclusively peaceful purposes may contribute to a weakening of the system that the Treaty has created and that enjoys general acceptance.

MERCOSUR member and associated States express full support for the authority of the Agency as the competent body to verify compliance on the part of member States with their obligations under safeguards agreements.

In connection with the so-called assurances of supply of nuclear fuel and the Agency's potential role in that regard, we believe the issue still requires a deep analysis by all member States. It is imperative that this concept not weaken the rights enshrined in the NPT nor disturb the delicate balance of the Treaty.

We recognize the importance of technical cooperation and assistance in the multilateral field through active participation in the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme and the Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean, under the presidency of Argentina since last September.

We also recognize with satisfaction the efforts of the Agency and member States aimed at strengthening international cooperation in the field of nuclear and radiological security, transport and management of waste. In particular, we would like to highlight the progress achieved in the various activities aimed at maintaining and increasing security, such as the information and telecommunication networks for nuclear radiological safety and the national and regulatory infrastructure in charge of radioactive sources.

We also underline the efficacy of the IAEA verification system as an instrument to assure the international community of the peaceful purposes of nuclear programmes. Without prejudice, we consider that efforts to improve the efficiency of safeguards should continue, with the help of member States.

Allow me to make special mention of the common system of accounting and control applied by the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, as well as the valuable cooperation between this Agency and the IAEA. At the bilateral level, we welcome the letter, dated 3 March 2008, sent by Argentina and Brazil to the IAEA on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Given the medium-term projections of a substantial increase in the use of nuclear electric energy and cognizant of the fact that access to viable sources of sufficient energy is fundamental to development, we support the efforts undertaken by the IAEA to strengthen activities related to nuclear science and technology and their growing contribution to the resolution of key issues for member States in vital areas such as agriculture, food, human health, energy production, management of water resources and environmental protection.

Similarly, we note the work of the Agency with regard to the renewed interest in nuclear electric energy, and we support efforts to ensure that all developments in that field are accessible to all those interested in nuclear energy.

We believe the long-term management and disposal of spent fuel and waste continues to be a challenge in light of the growing use of nuclear electric energy and the increase in the spent fuel inventory. We recognize the efforts of the secretariat on the options for the final geological disposal of high-level waste, long-lived waste and spent fuel.

To conclude, allow me to express our support for IAEA efforts to combat nuclear and radiological terrorism and for the activities of the Agency aimed at the universal application of international legal instruments on the physical protection of materials in nuclear installations and radioactive sources.

Ms. Chabau (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba considers that the technical cooperation activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) play an essential role, since they enable the application of nuclear technologies and sciences to benefit social and economic development.

The Agency's technical cooperation pillar must be strengthened and given the necessary resources, unconditionally and in accordance with its priority. The Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy, for instance, is evidence of the benefits of nuclear technology in important areas for people. Such programmes must be given the necessary resources for their effective implementation.

Nuclear technologies are applied in Cuba in vital areas, namely public health care, agriculture, food, hydrology and environmental protection. That explains our strong commitment to the promotion of IAEA technical cooperation activities.

Last year, Cuba met its financial obligations with respect to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund on time and in full. Over 90 per cent of our national projects were implemented, and our country provided 30 international experts and 11 professors.

The priority Cuba accords to cooperation among developing countries is evidenced by our participation in Coordinated Research Programmes and the Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America.

Cuba's commitment and capacity to participate in actions under the important IAEA technical cooperation pillar are adversely affected as a consequence of the illegal and criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade that the United States Government has imposed on Cuba for nearly five decades. According to conservative calculations, as of December 2007 the blockade has resulted in losses of over $93 billion for Cuba.

As a result of this criminal policy, it continues to be difficult for our country to acquire the very important equipment and reagents needed for technical cooperation projects. Likewise, the visas for Cuban specialists are denied to prevent them from participating in the IAEA technical meetings that take place in the United States.

All the fields in which the IAEA acts under its mandate are important and an adequate balance among them must be kept. Cuba rejects any attempt to favour the rest of the Agency's pillars to the detriment of the technical cooperation, which needs stable and predictable resources.

Cuba will actively participate in the consideration of the report on the role of the IAEA up to 2020 and beyond. We are convinced that the elaboration of the Agency's vision for the future has to be the outcome of a comprehensive and deep analysis process, which includes the active participation of all member States.

Our country rejects any attempt to use nuclear fuel supply as a means of political or economic coercion or as a mechanism to establish the monopoly of a few countries over the distribution of such fuel. Likewise, we oppose any attempt to impose safeguards obligations on some States that go beyond their legal commitments.

Cuba attaches great importance to radiation safety. We continue, in our country, to develop the required infrastructure and to train the necessary staff in this field. Our country is proud of its results concerning non-proliferation, reflected in the report submitted to the IAEA Board of Governors in March. It is important to highlight that — merely 4 years after Cuba signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, full-scope safeguards agreements and an additional protocol — we find ourselves in a small group of 47 countries in which the IAEA secretariat did not find any diversion of declared nuclear material nor any indication of non-declared nuclear material or activities.

We reaffirm that the Agency's verification activities must be carried out in an impartial and unbiased manner. All attempts to put pressure on or improperly interfere with verification activities, which jeopardize the efficiency and credibility of such activities, must be rejected. Verification must preserve its essentially technical character.

Cuba reaffirms its conviction that only unconditional dialogue based on equality and mutual respect will lead to the solution of the so-called Iran nuclear case. The inalienable right of States, including Iran, to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in accordance with their respective legal obligations, must be strictly respected. The IAEA is the only relevant authority that can verify the fulfilment of the obligations undertaken under the safeguard agreements of member States.

Notwithstanding the proclaimed end of the cold war, there are some 25,000 nuclear weapons in the world, 10,200 of which are ready for immediate use. Nuclear weapons upgrading programmes have not been halted. Instead of supporting nuclear disarmament, which is and must continue to be the highest priority in the field of disarmament, we see the promotion of stockpiling arms and wasting money on new weapons and weapons systems. The mere existence of nuclear weapons and doctrines based on their possession and use, poses a serious danger to international peace and security.

Cuba rejects the selective implementation of the NPT. Issues related to nuclear disarmament and the

peaceful use of nuclear energy must not continue to be disregarded while horizontal non-proliferation flourishes. I would like to close by reiterating Cuba's full support for the important work of the IAEA in the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy in a secure way.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his valuable efforts and for the insightful report to the General Assembly on the main activities of the Agency during the year 2007.

As he rightly mentioned, access to reliable and adequate sources of energy is essential for development. The demand for energy around the world has been growing significantly in the past decade and will continue to do so in the future. As a renewable source of energy, nuclear energy provides an attractive and appropriate option for many countries. Nuclear power would not only help to meet the increased demand for energy, but would also serve as a climatically benign source of energy. That has led a substantial number of countries, in particular developing countries, to embark upon planning for the construction of nuclear power reactors as well as significant expansions in their existing programmes.

As Mr. ElBaradei also mentioned, a nuclear renaissance is on the horizon. In this context and given the mandate and scientific capabilities of the IAEA, the Agency has a special mandate in relation to the management and strengthening of civilian use of nuclear power. Efforts to strengthen those technical cooperation activities of the Agency aimed at improving the capabilities of developing countries in nuclear energy production as a component of their energy mix should be pursued as a matter of priority.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has reaffirmed the important objective of the Agency and recognized the inalienable right of all NPT States parties to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Under article IV of the NPT, States parties have undertaken to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In fact, the inalienable right of all NPT States parties to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, without discrimination, constitutes one of the three major pillars upon which the NPT is founded. Notwithstanding such requirements, cooperation by developed countries, the main suppliers of nuclear high technology, with developing nations has remained at an unsatisfactory level.

In fact, nuclear cooperation between suppliers and recipients has been beset by restrictions, obstacles and disruption. Instead of promoting cooperation, a nuclear haves club, replete with discrimination and lack of transparency, has been created, inter alia, to hamper the access of NPT-party developing countries to nuclear power technology under the pretext of non-proliferation concerns. To remedy this shortcoming, the IAEA could and should play a decisive role by vigorously pursuing a balanced and non-discriminatory application of the provisions of the NPT and the IAEA safeguards. Attempts to politicize the work of the IAEA, including its technical cooperation programme, are in violation of the IAEA Statute and will only impede the ability of the Agency to carry out its responsibilities in an orderly fashion.

The application of safeguards is among the main functions of the Agency. While great efforts have been made by the Agency to apply and promote the universality of the safeguards to all relevant nuclear activities, it is distressing that some members of the Agency have yet to conclude their Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements. We call on all such members to fulfil their obligations at the earliest possible opportunity.

Furthermore, there is a dangerous trend at work that seeks to move away from preserving the NPT and ensuring its universality. Under that trend, those who have chosen not to accede to the NPT are not only subject to no pressure to do so, but are also encouraged and rewarded in various ways including through nuclear cooperation. As an example, the Zionist regime has been allowed to acquire a sizeable stockpile of nuclear weapons in the volatile Middle East region and to defy the will of all regional States and the international community to turn the Middle East into a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

I note the concerns raised today by Mr. ElBaradei on the security aspects of the issue and the possible diversion of peaceful nuclear activities into weaponization programmes. In this regard, I would like to emphasize the major concern there is about the nuclear activities of countries that are not party to the NPT and have nuclear weapons programmes. However,

we should be cautious against creating the impression that membership in the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State may be an impediment to the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

I would like to make some points regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's peaceful nuclear program. Iran, as a party to the NPT, considers the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to be its inalienable right and has thus invested extensive human and material resources in the field of nuclear power. This policy is based on long-term planning aimed at meeting the growing energy needs of the country. As we have stressed time and again, Iran's nuclear programme has been, is and will remain completely peaceful. All reports issued by the IAEA since November 2003 bear witness to the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and the Agency has repeatedly reaffirmed that it has not seen indications of diversion of nuclear material to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. As a result of Iran's proactive cooperation and full transparency in the implementation of the work plan agreed between Iran and the IAEA in the summer of 2007, all outstanding safeguard implementation issues have been resolved and closed, as indicated by Mr. ElBaradei today. Naturally, according to the modality agreed in the work plan recorded in IAEA document INFCIRC/711, the implementation of safeguards in Iran must become normalized. In that regard, the IAEA secretariat's observance of the mutual understanding as reflected in the agreed work plan is key.

What have been characterized as alleged studies are nothing but fabricated documents given to the Agency by a certain country. They have nothing to do with the verification issues emanating from the implementation of the safeguards agreement regarding nuclear activities. In the meantime, Iran has been denied originals or even copies of documents relating to those allegations. As a gesture of good faith, to the extent possible, we have already provided the IAEA with our assessments of alleged studies.

Without a doubt, rather than stemming from so-called proliferation concerns, the move to bring the Iranian nuclear file to the Security Council and the intention of the sponsors of resolutions adopted thus far have emanated from their ulterior motives and narrow national considerations in order to deprive the Iranian people of their inalienable rights. In that regard, the demand for the suspension of enrichment is illegal, ultra vires and in contravention of the provisions of the NPT. The Iranian nation will never accept illegal demands.

The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in his address to the General Assembly on 23 September 2008, reiterated that the Iranian nation is for dialogue. By presenting various offers, including its proposed package for constructive negotiations to the 5+1 Group in May 2008, Iran has already demonstrated its firm determination to hold negotiations without preconditions to find solutions to issues arising from the unjust and prejudicial approach of certain Powers. The 5+1 Group has yet to provide its response to Iran's proposed package. The policy of a few Powers to insist on suspension as a precondition for negotiations bears zero relation to reality and is an irrational and failed policy. Instead of applying economic leverage and political pressure, a solution that is based on reality, common concerns and obligations should be pursued as a viable alternative.

Finally, the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran are determined to exercise their inalienable right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and to build on their own scientific advances in developing various peaceful aspects of that technology, including the fuel cycle. Iran's commitment to its obligations under the NPT is steadfast. We ask nothing more than to exercise our inalienable rights.

Mr. Baum (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and all the staff of the Agency's secretariat for the excellent work they have done in the past year. The latest annual report (see A/63/276) is a testament to the excellent quality and scope of their work. We express our full support for the Agency. We are pleased to once again be a sponsor of the draft resolution (A/63/L.6) on the IAEA's annual report. We hope that the draft resolution will, as usual, be adopted by consensus.

The IAEA is currently at a crossroads, to employ the word used by Mr. ElBaradei at the opening of the Agency's fifty-second General Conference in September of this year. That word is fully justified given two important developments that have emerged since the last session of the General Assembly, which we wish to refer to by way of illustration.

First, the report of the Commission of Eminent Persons on the future of the agency, headed by former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, which is known as the 20/20 report, stressed the fact that progress in the area of nuclear disarmament is essential to advancing the guarantee agenda.

Secondly, the decision by the Nuclear Suppliers Group to waive the application of generalized guarantees as a condition for nuclear cooperation with India undoubtedly creates new challenges with regard to the application of the IAEA system of generalized guarantees, including the Additional Protocol. It is necessary to acknowledge that the non-proliferation regime as we know it has reached a turning point and that we must, without further delay, initiate a process of reflection in order to establish the appropriate basis to achieve the goal of a universal non-proliferation regime.

My delegation believes that those two aspects are closely linked. We must be careful to ensure that certain recent developments do not further complicate the increasing challenge faced by the IAEA because of the balance that it must preserve between its activities in the area of cooperation on civil nuclear technology, on the one hand, and its activities to control the peaceful use of nuclear technology, on the other. Switzerland, which is currently a member of the IAEA Board of Governors, will continue to strongly support the Agency as its carries out its mission.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus, which was present at the founding of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), very actively supports the Agency's activities. We are satisfied that the Agency has become a highly regarded and cautious organization that strives to ensure that nuclear energy is used in the safest possible manner and for exclusively peaceful purposes. The Agency also works actively to resolve a set of pressing international problems. Its activities are characterized by a high degree of professionalism.

Belarus reiterates its consistent position with regard to the need to strengthen the Agency's status. We believe that global trends in the areas of energy and economic development require a further strengthening of the role of the IAEA. In order to ensure its sustainable economic development, Belarus took the decision to build its first nuclear power plant. That was preceded by a long, in-depth and comprehensive analysis. The need to ensure energy security, reduce carbon emissions and increase trust in safety indicators regarding the operation of nuclear power plants, as well as the economic advantages and competitiveness of nuclear energy, were all factors that had an impact on our decision to develop a peaceful national nuclear programme.

Work is currently under way in Belarus to establish and improve the necessary capacity and infrastructure to implement a large-scale nuclear energy project. We are drafting and adopting nuclear-energy-related legislation and improving the structures that regulate nuclear and radiological safety. Work is also under way to select a site for the construction of the nuclear power plant.

Belarus is keen to establish the closest possible cooperation with the IAEA in implementing our national nuclear programme. We believe that the active technical and expert cooperation provided by the Agency to States implementing nuclear programmes is of critical importance to establishing the basic foundations for the safe utilization of nuclear energy throughout the world. Belarus gives priority attention to nuclear safety issues. We are especially interested in international cooperation in the area of the safe and reliable operation of nuclear facilities, including the management of radioactive sources and spent nuclear fuel.

More than anyone else, we in Belarus are aware of the possible consequences of the lack of appropriate safety mechanisms in the operation of nuclear power plants. Belarus has suffered more than any other country in the world as a result of the worst man-made disaster of the twentieth century, which occurred at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Belarus intends to continue to cooperate closely with the IAEA on issues pertaining to the rehabilitation of areas that were contaminated in the Chernobyl disaster. We expect the Agency to participate actively in the implementation of the United Nations Action Plan on Chernobyl to 2016 and in the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions.

Belarus does not intend to limit itself to the development of nuclear energy. We have decided that independence from any single source in the operation of any system — from financial systems to energy systems — makes it possible to avoid crises, including global ones. We are resolute supporters of diversifying

energy sources and supplies, including by mainstreaming alternative technologies and renewable sources of energy. That is one of the foundations of the policy of responsible international cooperation in the area of energy championed by Belarus.

There is a need to ensure fair access by all States to energy conservation technologies that are clean and economically rational and that exploit new sources of energy through a global United Nations mechanism to regulate the process. In that regard, during the course of this session of the General Assembly, we intend to hold a thematic debate on ensuring access by all States to energy conservation technologies and the use of alternative and renewable sources of energy while, of course, taking into account the issue of intellectual property rights.

It is clear that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to the energy crisis. That is why we welcome the decision of Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the IAEA, to establish an international energy organization. We share the view regarding the need for coordinated efforts in the area of energy and related fields, such as socio-economic development, climate change and poverty reduction.

One of the core functions of the IAEA's activities is to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime established. Belarus believes that, while taking into account the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Statute of the IAEA, existing international mechanisms must work together to ensure equal and non-discriminatory access by all interested States to the benefits of nuclear energy. We cannot agree to a practice whereby the readiness to cooperate in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is used by developed States as a way to exert political pressure on developing States. We believe that such a peaceful nuclear bludgeon should not be used in cases where Governments comply with their commitments in the area of non-proliferation.

In current circumstances, given the new threats and challenges facing the international community, the role of the NPT and that of the IAEA as the sole international organization established to ensure the necessary balance between the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and compliance with the regime established by the Treaty is increasingly important. Belarus attaches great importance to the Agency's work to improve and strengthen the effectiveness of its efforts in the area of safeguards.

By signing an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement in 2005, my country once again reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the strengthening of the Agency's authority in that area. We also recognize the role of the international export control regime. We in Belarus have established an effective national system for exports control. As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Belarus strictly abides by the Group's Guidelines on the supply and control of products.

We believe that the international community's non-proliferation efforts must be complemented by concrete steps in the area of nuclear disarmament and by the establishment and development of confidence-building measures between nuclear and non-nuclear States. At the same time, we base our policies on the usefulness of a comprehensive and realistic approach to processes related to non-proliferation and disarmament. In that regard, we should bear in mind that one of the most important goals of those processes is to establish a sound basis for enabling States to exercise their right to peaceful nuclear activities in accordance with the provisions of the NPT and the Statute of the IAEA.

In conclusion, we wish the Agency and its Director General every success in their multifaceted efforts in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Gumbi (South Africa): South Africa would also like to congratulate the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the Agency's annual report (see A/63/276) for 2007. The report shows that the Agency's activities are still relevant and vital to enhancing the use of nuclear energy for economic and social development and in preventing its diversion to non-peaceful uses. The report also instils confidence in the Agency's determination to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to health and prosperity throughout the world in a professional, efficient and responsible manner.

My delegation would also like to thank the representative of Algeria, in its capacity as Chairperson of the IAEA Board of Governors, for introducing the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.6 for the Assembly's usual consensus adoption.

South Africa concurs with the observation of the Agency regarding the central role of nuclear power at a time of a growing shortfall in energy and rising fossil fuel prices. It is encouraging that, in making that observation, the Agency has been equally mindful of the need to continue to seek innovative technologies aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of nuclear power through the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO). South Africa has gained much from its active participation in INPRO, which has proven to be a useful forum for studying innovative nuclear energy systems and associated requirements. South Africa welcomes the publication by the Agency of recommendations on INPRO methodology for the evaluation of different innovative nuclear energy systems. South Africa is certain that more benefits will accrue from INPRO's second phase, which will focus on innovative approaches to infrastructure and institutional development for countries beginning nuclear power programmes and on the establishment of collaborative projects between its members. My delegation also commends the activities of the Generation IV International Forum and the role played by that initiative in research activities on six next-generation nuclear energy systems.

South Africa believes that the Agency's role in creating an enabling environment for applications of nuclear technology — including as regards plant breeding for greater food security, the sterile insect technique to control insect pests, the effective management of water and life-saving medical procedures — constitutes a creative contribution to the improvement of living standards and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

With regard to the food and agriculture sector, my delegation would like to encourage the Agency to continue to assist Member States with tools for rapid diagnosis and protocols for animal disease early warning systems, as well as the provision of training to increase the use of nuclear and nuclear-related molecular diagnostic technologies. South Africa has noted with appreciation that the Agency's technical cooperation and coordinated research projects in the area of agriculture and food production supported more than 60 Member States in 2007.

My delegation likewise looks forward to greater cooperation between the Agency and South Africa's citrus industry in the fight against the false codling moth by integrating the use of the sterile insect technique with other control tactics. My delegation also welcomes the progress made by the Agency in examining the feasibility of using the sterile insect technique against the malaria-transmitting mosquito.

Like many other developing countries, South Africa is very much aware of the instrumental role of water security in advancing socio-economic development. It is for that reason that my delegation fully supports the Agency's activities in the management of water resources, including its efforts to bring isotope hydrology into the mainstream of national and international water-resources-related programmes.

South Africa believes that human health is yet another important area where the applications of nuclear technology play an important role. In that connection, my delegation welcomes the strengthening of collaboration between the Agency, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other partners in the area of nutrition and cancer. South Africa strongly supports the Agency's programme of action on cancer therapy, as more than 40 per cent of all cancers can be prevented and more than 30 per cent can be cured if detected early and treated.

Although the Agency's annual report for 2007 states that the nuclear industry has continued to demonstrate a high level of safety and security around the world, South Africa believes that nuclear safety and security is an important area that deserves continuous serious attention. It is a cause of concern that in the period under review there was slow progress in the number of accessions to and ratifications of the various safety conventions, which are important in improving safety performance and raising public confidence.

Despite those shortcomings, my delegation welcomes the Agency's publication of new safety requirements and guides, as well as the use of safety services to support the wider application of those standards. My delegation also commends the Agency for its activities in the areas of the control of radioactive sources, the management of radioactive waste and decommissioning, radiation protection for patients, incident and emergency preparedness and response, and civil liability for nuclear damage. With regard to nuclear security, my delegation encourages the Agency to continue its good work to enhance the security of nuclear and other radioactive material.

South Africa agrees that the threat of nuclear terrorism is one of the major challenges facing the world today. The issue of protecting against nuclear terrorism is important to South Africa, especially as we may draw from the Agency's expertise and require equipment in the overall security measures to be put in place for the soccer world championship to be held in South Africa in 2010.

My Government shares the Agency's view that safeguards and verification are instrumental in facilitating the peaceful use of nuclear applications for development. However, additional work still needs to be done. The Agency needs to be continuously equipped with the appropriate tools to instil international confidence in the fact that declared nuclear material around the world is fully accounted for and that the IAEA is able to verify that nuclear capabilities are being used for peaceful purposes only, as well as to provide assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities.

South Africa believes that it is incumbent upon all States to build confidence and provide assurances that nuclear capabilities are being used for peaceful purposes only. In that connection, my delegation urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran to heed the calls regarding the actions they must undertake with regard to the implementation of their NPT safeguards agreements with the Agency. South Africa also calls on member States to increase their cooperation with the Agency in dealing with the illicit network of nuclear proliferation activities.

South Africa recognizes the indispensable role that the additional protocol can play as a further measure to provide the necessary confidence and the desired assurances that member States apply their nuclear technology solely for peaceful purposes and that no declared or undeclared material is diverted to weapons programmes. Inasmuch as the additional protocol is voluntary, South Africa believes that it is an important confidence- and security-building measure that continues to play an essential role in creating a conducive environment for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. But it should not be used as a condition of supply for nuclear material.

It would be remiss of my delegation to conclude its statement without reference to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund. South Africa believes that the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund deserves urgent and decisive action. The Fund is a statutory and political commitment that needs to be realized. The Agency's technical cooperation projects constitute important building blocks to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to implement the projects of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, especially in the areas of water security and combating disease, hunger and poverty.

Over the years, developing countries have repeatedly stressed the need for the funding of the Agency's cooperation projects to be sufficient, predictable and assured. They have also stressed the need to increase the technical cooperation budget, as it is clearly insufficient. South Africa believes that the time has arrived to conclusively correct the mistake of the past 50 years by incorporating the funding of technical cooperation projects into the regular budget.

As we have done in the past, I would like to conclude my statement by reiterating South Africa's strongly held view that continuous and irreversible progress in nuclear disarmament and other related nuclear arms control measures remains fundamental to the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation. The systematic and progressive elimination of all nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again remain the only guarantee against their use. That should remain our goal. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and are mutually reinforcing. The verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons would prevent their use, irrespective of whose hands they were in. That would effectively curb their proliferation, because you cannot proliferate what you do not have.

Mr. Orkeldeen (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his introduction of the Agency's annual report (see A/63/276) for the consideration of the General Assembly. I should also like to thank him for the information it contains about the Agency's plans and programmes of action in the area of technical cooperation to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and maintain the international nuclear safety and security facilities. All of that attests to the growing role of the Agency as regards the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and development.

The Sudan attaches special importance to technological nuclear applications in the area of food security and the use of state-of-the-art technologies to control insects and manage hydrological resources, both of which are necessary components in the development of irrigation and large-scale agricultural projects. We therefore hope that we will continue to enjoy cooperation with UNICEF in the fields of education and agriculture and with the World Health Organization in those areas. The Agency's assistance to States in carrying out their development projects serves to complement those efforts. We hope that the Agency will continue to expand its sanitation projects on the regional and continental levels to combat insects that carry infectious diseases such as malaria, so that the continent can combat such deadly diseases and promote its social and economic development, as well as the MDGs.

The delegation of Sudan underscores the inalienable right of peoples and States to engage in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. We also underscore the principle that States must refrain from politicizing the vital role of the Agency lest they damage its credibility. On the basis of that principle, we would like to see those issues addressed in a fair, equitable manner through dialogue and negotiations in order to find appropriate solutions.

Sudan would like to underscore its support for peoples' aspirations to turn certain regions of the world into nuclear-weapon-free zones, which is one of the fundamental principles for the maintenance of international peace and security. Unfortunately, although for decades now it has striven to achieve that objective, the Middle East is far from that goal. Unfortunately, Israel, the only State that possesses nuclear weapons in the region, has, to date, refused to place its nuclear programme under IAEA safeguards and has disregarded all appeals by the international community to comply. A commitment by Israel to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its Additional Protocol would strengthen the maintenance of peace in the region.

My country's delegation welcomes the Agency's efforts on the African continent. We welcome the increased budget for fighting disease and for medical support in that field. We call upon the Agency to devote additional resources to the fight against disease and poverty throughout the world and the African continent in particular.

Mr. Alazemi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly is discussing today an important item on its agenda that is closely associated with the principles on which the United Nations was founded, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security.

Having reviewed the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the State of Kuwait expresses its most sincere appreciation to the Director General of the Agency, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and all his staff for the efforts they have made and for their tireless work to achieve the objectives and aspirations of the world's peoples and States by strengthening the principles of the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the good of humanity.

We also convey our thanks and gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Algeria for introducing to the General Assembly the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA for the year 2007 (A/63/L.6), for which my country will vote.

The State of Kuwait, since it joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on 15 August 1986, has concentrated on cooperation with the Department of Technical Cooperation of the IAEA and on the implementation of a set of projects dealing with building its own capacities and establishing special laboratories to measure the level of radioactive isotopes found in Kuwait's water and soil. On the basis of its belief in the vital importance of training qualified national professionals in the fields of protection from nuclear radiation and the safe handling of radioactive materials, my country took the initiative of hosting regional workshops in cooperation with the IAEA. Moreover, it continues to send trainees to attend training courses held at IAEA headquarters.

Through its Technical Cooperation Programme, the Agency plays a key role in the exchange and transfer of nuclear information and know-how to member States, in particular developing countries. The programme aims at facilitating the use of nuclear science and related technologies and at meeting, in a sustainable manner, the economical and social needs of member States through the safe use of nuclear power for food production, health care, water resource management and environmental protection.

In that context, we endorse what was contained in the annual report of the Agency for 2007 concerning enhancing the capabilities of the member States in applied nuclear technologies. Such technologies are aimed at removing obstacles to achieving sustainable food security through the use of technology to remedy soil deterioration, achieving a sustainable intensification of crop outputs and livestock production, combating pests by using sterile insect technology, improving the quality and safety of food and consolidating the efforts of the Agency to achieve sustainable food security. That is particularly important in the light of the international food crisis that most States are witnessing.

The vital and important role of the IAEA in preventing the use of nuclear power for military purposes and in promoting its exploitation for peaceful purposes in the safest possible ways can only be fulfilled through the concerted efforts of all States. The Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council has therefore recommended that its member countries conduct a study to create a joint programme on nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in accordance with international standards and regimes.

We would also like to note that it is unfortunate that, although the Agency has called on some States with advanced nuclear capabilities and activities to join the NPT and implement the IAEA comprehensive safeguards, those calls have gone unheeded, with negative effects for international peace and security.

In that context, the goal of achieving peace and stability in the Middle East region will never be accomplished as long as Israel remains the only country in the region that refuses to subject its facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime. That represents a key obstacle to achieving universality for the NPT and seriously impedes the strengthening of the NPT regime. If that irregular situation persists, it could encourage other States in the region to seek the possession of nuclear weapons or to manufacture them, citing the Agency's laxity in dealing with the countries that refuse to subject their installations to inspection.

In view of the intransigence of the Israeli position on that matter, we call upon the international community to pressure Israel to join the NPT and subject all of its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the IAEA. We affirm the right of all States in the region to obtain the technology, know-how and needed expertise to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes within the framework of the relevant international conventions, thus making the Middle East region, including the Gulf area, free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

As regards the development of the Iranian nuclear issue and proceeding from our conviction of the need to respect international legitimacy and the principle of pursuing a peaceful resolution to conflicts, the State of Kuwait calls upon the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its cooperation with the IAEA with transparency, in order to dispel the fears and doubts surrounding the nature of its nuclear programme, address all outstanding issues and give diplomatic efforts time to reach a peaceful solution through a demonstration of flexibility, wisdom and responsibility by all parties concerned.

In conclusion, I would like to express my country's hope that the international community will continue its support for the IAEA in its work to ensure the full, non-selective implementation of all international agreements related to disarmament, including the NPT, with its three main pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for the report (see A/63/276) on the work of the Agency in 2007. We appreciate the enormous efforts and important role of the Agency in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Over the past year, the Agency has come a long way in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Agency has provided assistance to member States through its nuclear power, nuclear applications and technical cooperation programmes to address challenges they encounter in the areas of energy supply, food security and environmental protection. Positive progress has been made in those areas.

Meanwhile, the Agency has also played a pivotal role in safeguarding the peaceful uses of nuclear material and facilities and in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. China appreciates the positive role of the Agency in facilitating the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and the Iranian nuclear issue. Over the past year, the

Agency has applied safeguards in over 160 countries and worked actively to promote the signing of additional protocols and implement the integrated safeguards framework.

The international momentum to develop nuclear power is today very strong. How to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by member States while preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is an important issue that has a bearing on the future orientation of the Agency. China is of the view that the role and function of the Agency should be adequately enhanced.

First, it is essential that the expertise of the Agency should be further enhanced so that it can better assist member States in establishing their nuclear power and applications infrastructure and in accelerating the pace and broadening the scope of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Secondly, the Agency should work further to strengthen its nuclear safety regulatory system and continue to assist member States to establish sound and effective nuclear security systems.

Thirdly, the Agency should continue to address verification issues in an impartial and balanced manner and work to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards system, so as to further promote the universality and effectiveness of the Additional Protocol.

China has always actively supported and participated in the Agency's technical cooperation programmes. We enjoy close cooperation with the Agency and the relevant member States. I am happy to recall the very fruitful cooperation on nuclear security between China and the Agency during our preparations for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The Agency sent qualified experts to China to provide advice and training. It also provided China with much-needed nuclear detection equipment. In May of this year, in the wake of the devastating earthquake that struck Wenchuan in China's Sichuan province, through its technical cooperation programme the Agency provided radioactive material detection equipment and relevant training. That played an important role in post-quake search operations using radioactive sources. The Chinese Government wishes to express its sincere thanks to the Agency for all those efforts.

As always, China will support the Agency and will continue to work with other member States and the secretariat to ensure that there is further progress in the Agency's work.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I take great pleasure in welcoming Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and in thanking him for introducing the Agency's annual report.

For over 50 years, the Agency has been the global centre of cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Russia has consistently championed promoting the Agency's role and standing. We will continue to actively support the multifaceted activities of the IAEA. We appreciate the efforts of Mr. ElBaradei, to whom the Agency owes a great deal of its success.

We believe that further improving the IAEA's activities should be based on a balanced approach to the implementation of all its mandated functions. We believe that the main task for the near future is to establish the conditions under which all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) can freely and fully make use of the benefits of nuclear energy in conformity with the requirements of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

An example of successful cooperation is the Agency's International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles, which has been implemented on Russia's initiative since 2000. We highly appreciate its results, the heightened international prestige it has acquired and the new positive trends in its implementation and development. We intend to continue to support that project, including through financial means.

The Russian Federation regards issues related to ensuring access to nuclear-fuel-cycle services and resolving the problem of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste management as key to the large-scale development of nuclear energy. It is very clear that the Agency has a central role in promoting multilateral approaches, and we will actively support the Agency in that regard. We are ready to work with all interested States to define and harmonize initiatives as regards multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, where that is feasible and possible. We have therefore consistently implemented the Russian initiative to

establish a global nuclear energy infrastructure, which will enable us to ensure equitable access to nuclear energy for all interested parties in strict compliance with the provisions of the regime established by the NPT.

To achieve the goals set out in that initiative, an international uranium enrichment centre was established jointly with the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2007 in the Russian Federation at the federal Angarsk Electrolytic Chemical Plant. We are grateful to the IAEA for its favourable assessment of Russia's initiative, in particular as regards the establishment of the international centre, which is open for participation by third-party States without any political conditions. At present, procedures are being finalized for the accession of Armenia and Ukraine. In January 2008, the IAEA was officially informed about the inclusion of the centre on the list of Russian nuclear fuel-cycle facilities that can be covered by IAEA safeguards.

Given the number of ideas that exist with regard to ensuring fuel supplies, it is clear that the time has come to consider harmonized approaches to establishing such guaranteed fuel supplies. The vision of what those principles should be was presented during the fifty-second session of the IAEA General Conference. We believe that it is necessary to build up the capabilities of the Agency as the only international body with the requisite authority to assess States' compliance with their obligations in the area of nuclear non-proliferation.

One of the Agency's effective instruments in that field is the additional protocol to the safeguards agreement. In the future, the additional protocol stands to become a universal norm for verifying compliance by NPT States parties with their obligations and an essential new standard in the field of nuclear export control. We intend to continue assisting the Agency in reinforcing the IAEA safeguards system, including through our national programme of scientific and technological support safeguards.

Russia ratified its Additional Protocol in October 2007. We hope that all the States that have not yet acceded to that important instrument — first and foremost, those engaged in significant nuclear activities or possessing significant stockpiles of nuclear materials — will do so as rapidly as possible.

Today, one of the most important factors in ensuring the national security of an individual State and the international community as a whole is the ability to respond in an adequate and timely manner to the threat of nuclear terrorism. In that respect, we note the valuable contribution of IAEA experts to the implementation of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. The Initiative significantly enhances and complements IAEA activities in the framework of the implementation of the Agency's Nuclear Security Plan for 2006-2009. We intend to further improve the parametres for our practical cooperation in that field, including in terms of resource support.

We back the IAEA's active cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other international organizations and structures on the issue of countering the threat of nuclear terrorism. The Russian Federation has ratified the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. We call upon States that have not yet done so to promptly sign and ratify both the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism as well as the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its amendment.

One of the three pillars on which all IAEA activity is based is ensuring nuclear and radiation safety. We welcome the efforts of the Agency to assist States in establishing and strengthening national regulatory systems in that field. We intend to continue to lend effective support to IAEA efforts to strengthen international cooperation in the field of nuclear and radiation safety, the safe transport of nuclear and radioactive materials, and the management of radioactive waste.

We attach great importance to the implementation of technical cooperation projects related to the removal of highly enriched uranium from Soviet-designed research reactors. In 2007, the Russian Federation provided technical assistance in the removal of fuel from Viet Nam, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Russia intends to assist Ukraine in improving the safety of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant site and accelerating the start of the facility's decommissioning. We will allocate $17 million for that purpose to the Nuclear Safety Account and the Chernobyl Shelter Fund.

An important area of the Agency's activities is the implementation of the Technical Cooperation Programme. The Russian Federation has been and

intends to continue to pay its voluntary contributions to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund in full. We are in favour of preserving the current mechanism for financing the Technical Cooperation Fund on the basis of contributions paid by member States in national currencies, the amount of which is assessed under the United Nations scale in accordance with existing practice.

The Russian Federation intends to assist the Republic of Armenia in improving the safety of the Armenian nuclear power plant. We plan to provide that assistance within the framework of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme and to allocate $10 million to that end.

I reaffirm our support for the draft resolution on the IAEA report (A/63/L.6). As a sponsor of the draft, Russia attaches great importance to the work of the Agency and is confident that it will be continued in the future in the interests of strengthening international security.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to begin by welcoming the report (see A/63/276) introduced by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its contents, reviewing the wide range of important and diverse activities of the Agency in 2007.

I also wish to confirm our absolute confidence in the effective ability of the Agency to perform its task in promoting a balanced focus on the three main pillars of its activities: technology, safety and verification.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The year 2007 marked the completion of five decades since the establishment of the IAEA, during which it contributed, inter alia, to the implementation of comprehensive safeguards regimes, the enhancement of nuclear safety and security standards, and increased use of safe nuclear energy. Accordingly, in 2007, some 439 nuclear reactors provided 15 per cent of the world's electricity, while dozens of others were either under construction or in the planning phase.

Egypt has supported the IAEA since its establishment, convinced of its role in enhancing international peace and the peaceful use of nuclear technology in areas that serve the development aspirations of developing countries and address international needs in a large array of fields.

Since it was entrusted with the establishment and management of comprehensive safeguards for non-nuclear-weapon States, the importance of the Agency's role has grown even further. All States of the Middle East have thus realized the central importance of acceding to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime, except for Israel, the only State that remains outside the regime, despite the adoption at the 2003 IAEA General Conference of a resolution entitled "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East", calling upon Israel to join the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime in order to facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and to enhance regional stability and confidence-building.

There is no doubt that the presence of nuclear facilities not subject to the safeguards regime and not complying with international safety or security standards in the Middle East is a matter that calls for an effective regional and international response, especially since the absence of international oversight of such facilities threatens the security and stability of the entire region.

We appeal to countries that have not recognized the importance of Arab calls for the IAEA to seriously address Israel's nuclear capabilities to reassess their unconstructive approach in preventing the consideration of a draft resolution of such importance at the IAEA General Conference. That trend was confirmed again at the 2008 session and will further complicate the crisis and increase nuclear threats in the Middle East, and eventually weaken the role of the Agency itself.

It is important to prove by practical means the sincerity of the support, often reiterated in our statements to the General Assembly and its First Committee, for the central role played by the IAEA in the field of verification. Such practical means could include providing the Agency with the financial resources it needs and strengthening its legal authority through the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards regime, thus allowing it to demand additional commitments from States to strengthen its verification capabilities.

At a time when developing countries' need is growing for clean and inexpensive energy sources to address their development plans and promote their socio-economic situations, Egypt sees a crucial role for

the Agency in widening the horizons of sustainable development and in effectively facilitating the satisfaction by non-nuclear-weapon States signatories to the NPT of their growing nuclear energy needs. That should proceed in a context that secures them the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as provided for in article IV of the NPT.

The importance of the IAEA's role has increased even further as the international community continues to witness qualitative and quantitative limitations on nuclear energy-related technology transfers from developed to less developed countries. It is indeed regrettable that efforts continue to impose unjustified restrictions on the acquisition by non-nuclear-weapon States of the necessary material and technology to develop their peaceful nuclear programmes, on the one hand, while on the other, current efforts are being made to facilitate the acquisition by non-NPT member States of nuclear technologies and materials exceeding those which have ever been granted to non-nuclear-weapon States. Egypt believes that such an approach significantly endangers the universality of the comprehensive safeguards regime and undermines efforts to avoid politicizing it in a manner that jeopardizes its validity and value and the feasibility of the NPT itself.

In that context and despite the fact that nuclear-weapon States have not fulfilled their nuclear disarmament obligations under the NPT, the 1995 package of the Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, those States and others that enjoy nuclear protection under them are still working to impose additional commitments on non-nuclear-weapon States in the form of additional safeguards. They are doing so while ignoring the voluntary nature of any additional international commitment beyond the comprehensive safeguards regime, as well as the logical inevitability of achieving the universality of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards system prior to any attempt to change the system in a discriminatory manner.

Through 2007 and up until now, the Agency has continued to consider the technical, legal and operational dimensions of a number of current proposals on nuclear fuel assurances based on a multilateral approach to the nuclear fuel cycle. Egypt's position is in line with the statement made by the Director General of IAEA in his June 2007 report to the Board of Governors, to the effect that there is no basis for assuming that multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle should in any way restrict free national choices in that regard, in accordance with the inalienable right guaranteed by the NPT to non-nuclear-weapon States without restrictions to that right.

Egypt reiterates its interest in supporting the activities of the Agency in the area of technical cooperation with ourselves and other developing countries that benefit from technical cooperation programmes for the use of nuclear technologies in the sectors of health, agriculture, food, water resources, radioactive isotopes and irradiation. In that context, we reiterate our belief in the importance of enhancing the role of the Agency in the area of technology transfer by securing and increasing the financial resources allocated for technical cooperation activities, given that such activities represent a main pillar of the Agency's key area of activities under its statute.

Taking into consideration the role of the Agency as the international multilateral forum in applying the highest safety standards to nuclear energy reactors, Egypt, as a State seeking nuclear energy on its route to development, cooperates with the Agency in that regard. That cooperation includes assessing energy requirements and technical advice with regard to the safe and effective development of national capabilities in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We look forward to the continued support of the Agency for our efforts in that area.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express our particular appreciation to the staff of the Agency and Director General Mohamed ElBaradei for the outstanding and balanced role he has played in leading the Agency since he assumed his post in 1997. I also wish to express our gratitude for the results achieved under his responsible leadership in terms of developing that most sensitive and important international body. In that regard, I would like to reaffirm that Egypt will continue to support the Agency in all possible ways in order to preserve the value that the entire international community attaches to its balanced role and to the contribution that it makes to security, stability, scientific advancement and welfare.

Mr. Chow (Singapore): Singapore joins other members of the General Assembly in thanking the Director General and his dedicated staff for the comprehensive report (see A/63/276) and their

excellent work. That is testimony to the leadership and skills of the Director General. We would like to reaffirm our full support for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the global focal point for nuclear cooperation, in line with its three pillars of technology, safety and security and verification.

The year 2007 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the IAEA, which was a concrete expression of the international community's hopes for and aspirations to "atoms for peace". After five decades of important progress, the Agency's activities remain vital in advancing the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology for economic and social development. In that context, Singapore welcomes the Agency's initiative to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that it will face in the years to come. The recent work of the Commission of Eminent Persons on the future of the Agency constitutes a timely exercise to review how the three pillars of nuclear safety, nuclear technology and nuclear verification can be strengthened. To that end, Singapore extends its full support to the Agency and stands ready to work with all stakeholders.

At a time when nuclear energy is becoming increasingly attractive as an alternative source of energy for a growing number of countries, the IAEA's primary role of ensuring the peaceful, safe and secure use of nuclear energy has gained renewed importance. At the end of 2007, a total of 34 nuclear power plants were under construction around the world. I understand from the Director General's recent statement that that number has increased to 36. The increased interest in the use of nuclear power is notably centred in Asia, corresponding to the region's rapid economic growth and accompanying rise in energy demand.

Under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, States have the sovereign right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful means. At the same time, there is also a grave responsibility to carefully consider safety and security issues that arise from the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Chernobyl tragedy is a solemn reminder of the profound and long-term detrimental consequences resulting from a serious nuclear power plant accident. The impact on the affected people and the surrounding economies continues to be felt today. We should heed that lesson because the world can ill afford a repeat of Chernobyl.

Unfortunately, despite advancements in science and technology and the introduction of earthquake-proof designs for today's nuclear power plants, accidents can still happen. The Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant and the earthquake of 16 July 2007 provide a stark reminder of how accidents can occur. Fortunately, the nuclear power plant was designed to withstand shocks above its recommended seismic threshold. That helped to avert a potentially serious nuclear disaster. In that case, Japan's responsible approach to design safety was commendable.

However, we can never afford to be complacent, especially when more States are considering developing nuclear energy as an alternative source of energy. States undertaking such nuclear options should not neglect or compromise the safety of their people and the neighbouring region. Plant designs and site locations in particular should be carefully considered. For example, locating nuclear reactors within earthquake zones or active volcanic areas can be potentially deadly. The effects of a nuclear accident are transboundary and can affect the region at large. It is therefore imperative that regional safety concerns also be taken into serious consideration when new nuclear power plants are planned and built.

At the twelfth summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), held in Cebu, the Philippines, ASEAN leaders, acknowledging that the region needed to explore alternative sources of energy, tasked officials to look into a regional nuclear safety regime. The leaders again reaffirmed their decision to forge ASEAN-wide cooperation to establish a regional nuclear safety regime by signing the ASEAN Declaration on Environmental Sustainability at the thirteenth ASEAN summit.

We believe that the IAEA can play an instrumental role in helping our region to adopt a set of common norms and best practices that are in line with international standards for the design of nuclear power plants and nuclear technology management and development. Regional safety and security regimes under the IAEA auspices can be critical in helping States to develop capacity based on the IAEA's safety protocols and standards. Singapore will continue to work closely with the IAEA and regional partners to develop and promote a regional framework of collaboration and cooperation, as well as to adopt the best practices in that field. In that way, the region can take a constructive and responsible step forward in

fostering a culture of safety among nuclear regulators and operators.

Looking ahead, we believe that it is also timely to examine the future role of the IAEA. A number of important recommendations made by the Commission of Eminent Persons are worth considering. They include the further harmonization of regional nuclear standards, a move on the part of countries from voluntary to mandatory international peer reviews, and compulsory inspections to assess compliance with nuclear standards in order to help increase safety worldwide and enhance public confidence.

In conclusion, Singapore would like to express its continued support for the important work of the IAEA in the areas of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, safety and security, and verification. We strongly urge all States — especially those with outstanding obligations and issues — to cooperate fully with the IAEA to further strengthen cooperation and confidence-building as part of the international community's efforts to enhance global peace and security.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, I would like first to express our appreciation to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his presentation of the 2007 annual report of the IAEA (see A/63/276). His tenure has come at a time of complex global challenges. Our gratitude goes to him for his long years of excellent service and steadfast efforts, which have seen the Agency grapple with those challenges in an effective manner while preparing to meet future ones.

Among the greatest achievements of the IAEA are its contributions in advancing human progress in nuclear applications, promoting socio-economic development and maintaining world peace and security. We would therefore like to express our sincere appreciation for the role that the Agency has long played in promoting nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under the three pillars of its mandate.

Indonesia attaches great importance to technical cooperation with the Agency, which contributes significantly to development in Member States. But it is our obligation to ensure that the IAEA has sufficient, guaranteed and predictable resources for its activities. For its part, Indonesia has been supportive of technical cooperation activities and has consistently paid its annual share of the targets of the Technical Cooperation Fund. For the Fund's 2009 target, Indonesia has pledged the amount of $100,000.

In our view, the current funding system for the Fund, which relies on voluntary contributions, is neither fair nor capable of meeting the essential needs of Member States, especially developing countries. In order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its technical cooperation, the IAEA should pursue a more balanced distribution of its budget in order to reflect the equal importance of the Agency's three pillars, thereby maintaining a balance among its various statutory activities.

It remains imperative to strengthen the effectiveness of the Agency — including its performance in technical cooperation activities — so that it can face the challenges of changing circumstances and the diverse needs of Member States. In that regard, we value the Director General's initiative to establish the Commission of Eminent Persons to reflect upon the nature and scope of the Agency's programme until 2020 and beyond. We share the hope that the report will trigger discussions among Member States so that its recommendations will contribute to the achievement of development goals and will enhance the Agency's credibility and effectiveness.

Indonesia has long been a strong supporter of promoting nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and the IAEA has a large and active technical cooperation programme in my country. Indonesia greatly commends the Agency's work in areas of vital importance, such as food and agriculture, including its work to enhance the capacity of Member States to ensure sustainable food security and productivity through the application of nuclear techniques. The reinvigoration of agriculture and support for research on a variety of technologies, including better-adapted crop varieties and agriculture techniques, are key. It is within the Agency's mandate to contribute strongly to those global efforts to alleviate food shortages by helping to implement all technological and scientific resources available within its capacity.

Bearing in mind that the major health issues of our time, such as cancer, require concerted international cooperation, we also support the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy. The Programme has played a growing role in international

efforts against cancer in the developing world. Indonesia is interested in benefiting from the cooperation with the IAEA in that important Programme.

It is positive to note that the IAEA has increased international awareness about the future role of nuclear energy in tackling the grave challenge of climate change. We are pleased that the *Nuclear Technology Review 2008* highlighted the results of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Bali, Indonesia, last December, which charted the way for what will, we hope, be an effective post-2012 Kyoto agreement on climate change. The *Review* rightly indicated that the Conference had marked a step forward in managing risks related to global climate change.

We commend the work of the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO). Indonesia, as a member of INPRO, continues to support its activities to meet global energy demands and to promote sustainable economic and social development.

As part of the efforts to strengthen the international nuclear safety regime, we have participated actively in the Asian Nuclear Safety Network (ANSN). It has played an important role in promoting nuclear safety networks and contributes to the nuclear safety activities of Asian countries. We encourage other countries in Asia to join ANSN, which is the sole network for promoting nuclear safety in the region. We encourage the Agency to continue its support for the regional nuclear safety activities carried out within the framework of ANSN.

Indonesia, as an archipelagic State, continues to support the efforts of the IAEA to strengthen cooperation and coordination, to address the potential for accidents or incidents during the transportation of spent fuel and high-level nuclear waste and radioactive materials by sea, and to thwart possible dangers to human health in and the environment of the transit countries. We share the view that the expansion of nuclear power will create opportunities as well as challenges and that we need to find a solution with regard to spent-fuel management and waste disposal in order to ensure the sustainable development of nuclear energy.

Nevertheless, it is important that the measures to strengthen nuclear security not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities, the exchange of nuclear material for peaceful purposes and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Indonesia continues to support the Agency's work to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system. The safeguards system is both a fundamental part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential element in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. My delegation is pleased to state that as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Indonesia has put a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol into force, and has implemented integrated safeguards in collaboration with the Agency. However, we share the concern that progress on the universalization of safeguards agreements and additional protocols has been slower than expected. The universalization should be applied equally, to both non-nuclear and nuclear-weapon States.

Indonesia attaches great importance to the NPT and hopes that, in the future, the parties will be able to formulate a consensual text that could be recommended for adoption at the 2010 Review Conference. At the Conference, all countries should renew their commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and intensify their efforts to realize the three pillars of the NPT in a balanced, comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner. The Agency should prepare, and should be ready to respond to the technical needs of verification for future nuclear disarmament. Since nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing, the Agency should not cover only verification in the context of both fulfilment of non-proliferation commitments.

We are of the view that the creation of a multilateral fuel cycle arrangement that would, inter alia, guarantee the security of the nuclear fuel supply, would provide a complementary mechanism for strengthening the existing non-proliferation regime and should be discussed in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner. The objectives and modalities to establish such arrangements should not terminate or restrict the right of each State to develop nuclear technology.

For a long time now, the General Conference of the IAEA has devoted attention to the situation in the Middle East. Sadly, however, there has been no progress in the efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We are concerned by that situation, and we stress the demand that Israel place all its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards and accede to the NPT, as it has already been called upon to do by a number of resolutions of the General Assembly and the General Conference of the IAEA.

Indonesia appreciates the overall contribution of the IAEA, despite the difficulties, in making progress in the implementation of safeguards agreements in some countries.

To conclude, my delegation would like to stress that Indonesia is deeply committed to the cause of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and fully supports the work of the IAEA. Challenges that confront us should be met through concerted and concrete actions in which all Member States, working together, must bear their responsibility. Strengthening the Agency is a shared interest and a commitment for all States members of the Agency. We believe that further constructive debate among the member States is imperative to ensure that demands, concerns and priorities, particularly those of the developing countries, are duly addressed.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): The delegation of Pakistan would like to begin by expressing its appreciation for the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/63/276) and the efforts made by the Agency and its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, in that regard.

The IAEA's role as the world's focal point in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy assumes greater significance in view of the fast-growing global demand for energy and the shortage of fossil fuel reserves, as well as the diverse challenges of environmental impacts and proliferation. The IAEA can make a significant contribution in meeting the needs and challenges of the twenty-first century by ensuring equitable access to nuclear materials, technology and equipment for peaceful purposes.

In order to ensure the realization of every State's right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, there is a need to develop universal and non-discriminatory criteria for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including nuclear power generation. In this regard, principles should be placed above expediency and commercial interests. A non-discriminatory approach in the promotion of civilian nuclear cooperation would help reinforce confidence and credibility in the IAEA safeguards system and strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

In the context of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it would be pertinent to recall the words of United States President Eisenhower, who in his "Atoms for Peace" address to the General Assembly at its 470th plenary meeting, in 1953, stated the following:

> "It is not enough to take this weapon out of the hands of the soldiers. It must be put into the hands of those who will know how to strip its military casing and adapt it to the arts of peace."

It is imperative to place the "Atoms for Peace" paradigm, the founding spirit of the IAEA, at the centre of any future vision for the Agency. That can only be ensured through maintaining balance between the promotional activities of the Agency and its work in the areas of verification, nuclear safety and security. We should not lose sight of the fact that the IAEA's statutory mandate in the areas of verification, safety and security is aimed at facilitating the pursuit of the primary objective of the Agency, namely the promotion of peaceful uses of atomic energy.

It is essential that the IAEA, as one of the most efficient technical organizations in the United Nations system, maintain focus on its technical promotional character. The promotional activities of the Agency are best reflected in its Technical Cooperation Programme. This dynamic process of technical assistance has brought about tangible benefits to developing member States.

Pakistan has been one of the major beneficiaries of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme. The Agency has made a valuable contribution to the development of our peaceful nuclear programme. We would like to express our deep appreciation to the Department of Technical Cooperation for achieving a high rate of implementation, and for its excellent programme delivery.

For our part, we have made — and remain prepared to continue to make in the future — our contribution towards the Agency's promotional activities, by sharing our experience, offering training placements and providing the services of experts. As

one of the Agency's earliest member States, Pakistan has long been a strong advocate of promoting and harnessing nuclear technology for peace, progress and prosperity for all.

Pakistan has developed the entire range of nuclear fuel cycle facilities. We now have two nuclear power plants in operation, while a third is under construction. We have plans to establish a uranium conversion and enrichment facility to cater for the needs of our nuclear power plants. As announced already, Pakistan intends to place that facility under IAEA safeguards. We look forward to the IAEA's assistance in the completion of our nuclear power generation plan, including assistance in exploration and prospecting for uranium in the country, so that this clean source of power production is exploited to the maximum possible extent in the place of reliance on fossil fuels.

Parallel to the development of the nuclear fuel cycle, an extensive programme for the application of nuclear technology and radioisotopes in agriculture, hydrology and the medical and industrial sectors is also under way in Pakistan.

Since the foundation of its atomic energy development programme, Pakistan has always recognized that nuclear safety and security in both national and international contexts is a vital objective. Although the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) was established as an independent body in 2001, the genesis of the physical protection of nuclear facilities and security of nuclear and radioactive materials goes back decades to when safety and security were internally managed by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

In the area of nuclear security, Pakistan has always strived to follow the existing international standards. The IAEA document INFCIRC/225, entitled "The Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities", though a voluntary guidance for member States, has been used as a basis for inspection and enforcement in Pakistan. We are also following the guidance contained in the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and are participating in the IAEA's Illicit Trafficking Database.

The law establishing the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) mandates that body to ensure that appropriate measures for the physical protection of nuclear installations and nuclear materials are taken by all licensees. It also requires the Authority to ensure enforcement of regulations prohibiting unauthorized access to, possession of or use of nuclear and radioactive material and facilities containing such materials.

Since its establishment, the Authority has adopted a body of regulations and upgraded those that already existed to bring them into line with international standards on nuclear safety and security.

Since June 2006, the Authority has been implementing the national nuclear security action plan in Pakistan. The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority has used IAEA safety standards as the basis for national regulations to regulate nuclear installations and facilities. The Authority has established fruitful cooperation with the Agency and we deeply appreciate valuable assistance received from the Agency in the areas of nuclear safety and security. However, we urge the Agency to work out ways and means to facilitate transfers of safety-related technology. We also urge States with advanced nuclear technology to move beyond emphasizing the significance of nuclear safety and security and to take steps to remove unjustified restrictions on transfers of related technology and equipment in order to promote the objective of nuclear safety and security worldwide.

I would like to conclude by placing on record Pakistan's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. Our track record on IAEA safeguards has been immaculate and we have always fulfilled our obligations. We have effective controls in place on the export of goods, technologies and facilities related to nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. These controls meet existing international standards. On the basis of our moral and political commitment to its objectives, we believe that the global non-proliferation regime must be strengthened by the application of its norms in a non-selective, non-discriminatory and equitable manner.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, let me thank International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei for his comprehensive report and his statement on the recent major developments regarding the activities of the Agency.

We welcome the outcome of the fifty-second General Conference of the Agency held in Vienna between 29 September and 4 October 2008, including

the approval of the Sultanate of Oman, Kingdom of Lesotho and Papua New Guinea for membership of the Agency. We also welcome States that became members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2007, namely, Bahrain, Burundi, Cape Verde, Congo and Nepal.

The IAEA annual report for 2007, which marks 50 years of the Agency's indispensable and outstanding work, indicates that the Agency is continuing to develop its activities in many areas of nuclear technology of great interest and importance to the human community. We wholeheartedly support the need for the Agency to expand technical cooperation in the application of nuclear technology in the areas of food, agriculture, medicine and natural resources.

Today, we are going to adopt the annual draft resolution reaffirming the strong support of the General Assembly for the indispensable role of the IAEA in "encouraging and assisting the development and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful uses, in technology transfer to developing countries and in nuclear safety, verification and security" (*A/63/L.6, para. 3*). Indeed, the role and goals of the Agency, which serves as one of the main instruments of the nuclear-weapon non-proliferation regime, cannot be overestimated. Unfortunately, the conflicts and threats in that area have not diminished.

The international community had failed to resolve disarmament and non-proliferation issues owing to the absence of consensus. The IAEA should play a leading role under the three pillars of its mandate to monitor the technology, safety and verification of nuclear use among nations. We support the strengthening of the Agency's function as a non-proliferation watchdog, verifying the production, possession, use and import and export of all nuclear material.

As a member of the Agency, Kazakhstan is undertaking effective measures to implement of its obligations to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, including the Additional Protocol to the Agreement on the Application of Safeguards between Kazakhstan and the IAEA. We are interested in deepening cooperation with the Agency to meet our intention to increase uranium production under strict IAEA control.

As the IAEA report indicates, continuing population growth and longer human lifespan are creating challenges for energy supply. The ongoing crises and disruption in energy security create a growing demand for nuclear energy. The latest IAEA projections estimate that global energy consumption will grow by 53 per cent by 2030, with 70 per cent of the growth coming from developing countries, where 17 of the 29 nuclear reactors currently under construction are located.

Kazakhstan possesses approximately 19 per cent of the world's explored uranium reserves, which is around 1.5 million tons. In 2007 uranium production in Kazakhstan was 6,637 tons; compared with the 5,281 tons produced in 2006, this represents a growth rate of 25.7 per cent. In 2008, we plan to produce approximately 9,600 tons of uranium. In that perspective, we plan to bring annual production of natural uranium to more than 15,000 tons by 2010, making Kazakhstan the world's leading uranium producer.

Taking those facts into account, the Government of Kazakhstan adopted a national programme of atomic energy development, which envisions the intensification of cooperation with the IAEA and its member States. With the expansion of nuclear activities in Kazakhstan, the Government is planning to create a special authority to coordinate national programmes for the peaceful use of atomic energy.

Kazakhstan is actively implementing the new edition of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Projects for strengthening controls on ionizing radiation sources and on safe and secure management of strong sources are being successfully implemented. Instruments have been prepared to introduce the national register of sources of ionizing radiation and an inventory of radioactive sources on Kazakhstan's territory is being carried out. In implementing these and other similar programmes, we are thankful for the support and effective assistance of the IAEA and countries taking part in the projects.

During the IAEA General Conference in Vienna this year, we organized an exhibition on Kazakhstan's renunciation of nuclear weapons, the seventeenth anniversary of the closing of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and the role of our country in strengthening the non-proliferation and nuclear material control regimes. That event also reflected Kazakhstan's nuclear-fuel-cycle capacity through the examples of the work being done at the Ulbinsk plant and at the research reactors of the National Nuclear Centre, as well as our

cooperation with foreign companies in the production of innovative and export-oriented materials.

From 18 to 22 May 2009, Kazakhstan will host the IAEA International Conference on Remediation of Land Contaminated by Radioactive Material/Residues. We also welcome the IAEA's readiness to work together with its partners in drafting a study, *Kazakhstan: a Country Profile on Sustainable Energy Development*.

With the support of our Government, the joint stock company Nuclear Technology Park has commenced operations in Kurchatov. It is expected to lay the groundwork for the development of applications for the peaceful uses of atomic energy, including nuclear power. Last year, a heavy-ion accelerator was launched at Astana, and the construction of the Kazakhstan tokamak for materials testing is currently under way in Kurchatov; the project is moving towards the fabrication and installation of basic equipment. A nuclear-medicine centre is being planned in Almaty, and its construction is also supported by the Government.

We welcome the conclusion, set out in the report under consideration, that in 2007 the nuclear industry continued to demonstrate a high level of safety and security around the world. Kazakhstan, while continuing to combat the nuclear threat, recognizes the right of any nation to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under strict international controls, in particular those of the IAEA. The Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols constitute its current verification standards. We call on States that have not yet brought into force their IAEA safeguards agreements or additional protocols to do so in an expeditious manner.

We must find ways to resolve the conflict situations that have recently arisen. Such means should not infringe on the right of countries to technological development or hamper their access to knowledge and should restore the confidence of the international community with regard to peaceful nuclear activities.

Kazakhstan is taking measures to strengthen border radiation monitoring and to further upgrade its system for combating the illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials. We have joined the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership initiative and signed a Statement of Principles during the second ministerial meeting of the Partnership, held on 16 September 2007 in Vienna. Our country fully agrees with the main principles of the Global Partnership and its vision of nuclear energy cooperation aimed at the safe and secure expansion of civilian nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We believe that the Partnership provides new momentum for the development of national nuclear and energy industries.

Kazakhstan fully complies with all commonly accepted norms in its export control policy. As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, our country is taking effective measures to meet its obligation to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. A system for combating illicit nuclear trafficking has been established and is being improved on a day-to-day basis. At the same time, we call for thorough scrutiny of any new restrictions on the transfer of nuclear technologies, with a view to avoiding unjustified barriers to peaceful atomic development.

Mindful of the potential threat posed by highly enriched materials, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources of Kazakhstan has adopted a five-year programme to convert the VVR-K research reactor to low-enriched fuel. The safe decommissioning of the BN-350 fast breeder reactor in Aktau is also in progress.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm Kazakhstan's full support for the activities of the IAEA in accordance with article II of the Agency's statute, which states, "The Agency shall seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world".

Programme of work

The Acting President: I wish to inform members that the consideration of agenda item 104 (a), "Election of twenty members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination", scheduled for today, Monday, 27 October 2008, has been postponed to a later date to be announced.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.32

General Assembly
Sixty-third session

Official Records

32nd plenary meeting
Monday, 27 October 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 80 (*continued*)

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/276)

Draft resolution (A/63/L.6)

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): I join others in thanking Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his presentation to the General Assembly of the annual report of the Agency for 2007. It was a year of notable success for the Agency in its efforts to ensure that the benefits of nuclear technology were shared globally for economic and social development.

My delegation shares the concern of the IAEA that the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund continues to lag behind the pressing needs of developing countries. In this regard, my delegation reiterates the need for the IAEA to ensure an equitable balance between the three pillars of its mandate: nuclear applications, particularly through technical cooperation; nuclear safety and security; and nuclear verification. This is especially important with the emerging convergence of a global nuclear energy renaissance with the need to ensure the efficient use of nuclear power while also addressing nuclear safety, security and the verification of nuclear weapons non-proliferation safeguards by the IAEA.

The emerging global food crisis requires the attention of the IAEA in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In view of the proven benefits of nuclear technology applications in food production and agriculture, my delegation supports the continued operation of the FAO-IAEA Joint Division and looks forward to progress in dealing with the crisis with the assistance of these important international organizations.

It is in that spirit that my delegation looks forward to the new three-year IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme cycle, which puts emphasis on food and agriculture, human health, natural resources and nuclear power, in line with growing demand for technical cooperation for both peaceful non-power and power applications of nuclear technology from developing member States. Towards this end, resources for the management of technical cooperation for development under IAEA Major Programme 6 must be increased.

With regard to the call for the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the resources for the Fund are sufficient, assured and predictable, Malaysia supports the idea of changing the status of contributions to the Fund from voluntary to more obligatory for all IAEA member States. Nevertheless, Malaysia fully supports the call to employ hedging mechanisms to protect against the erosion of the Fund's value owing to currency fluctuations. We also

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support the establishment of appropriate criteria for setting Fund targets in order to avoid the unfavourable experience that recipient member States currently have to go through in negotiating Fund targets. In order to encourage more recipient States to provide extrabudgetary contributions to the IAEA in line with the concept of shared responsibility — such as those made to projects under the Regional Cooperation Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology in Asia and the Pacific — Malaysia calls on the IAEA to exempt such contributions from programme support costs.

For its part, Malaysia has consistently honoured its obligations to contribute on time and in full to both the regular budget and Fund of the Agency, in addition to making extrabudgetary contributions for the Regional Cooperation Agreement. As a member State that has benefited from the Technical Cooperation Programme, Malaysia has also, in return, supported the Programme and other IAEA activities through in kind contributions, by providing experts and fellowship training opportunities to other member States and by hosting various Agency activities.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to thank the IAEA and to put on record our appreciation of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Department's continuing support for the implementation of IAEA technical cooperation projects and various other activities in Malaysia, including the trust shown to Malaysia in allowing it to continue hosting the IAEA Postgraduate Educational Course in Radiation Protection and the Safety of Radiation Sources. My delegation also wishes to express our gratitude to other member States that have shown interest in the course, which has attracted candidates from not only within our region but beyond.

With regard to the application of full-scope safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East, Malaysia regrets that there has been no progress on consultations on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. In this regard, Malaysia wishes to reiterate the need for a prompt establishment of such a zone, as recognized in relevant United Nations resolutions. Malaysia views with serious concern the fact that certain nuclear facilities and materials in the Middle East are not subject to IAEA comprehensive safeguards. Thus Malaysia calls on Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to refrain from engaging in nuclear military activities and to unconditionally open all its nuclear facilities and activities to IAEA inspections and safeguards in order to clarify the extent of its past and present nuclear activities. Only then could the goal of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East be achieved.

My delegation firmly believes that the future of the IAEA should be based on the fundamental bargain underlying the NPT, in particular, the inalienable right of all the States parties to the Treaty to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with articles I, II and III of the NPT. That approach should encompass the need to respect the choice and decision of each country with regard to the range of peaceful uses of nuclear energy that they wish to undertake without jeopardizing their respective national policies or international cooperation agreements and arrangements for peaceful uses of nuclear energy and its fuel cycle.

Another fundamental principle is for developed Member States to promote the satisfaction of the legitimate needs for nuclear energy of developing countries by allowing them to participate to the fullest extent possible in the transfer of nuclear equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes with a view to achieving the greatest possible benefit, and by applying relevant aspects of sustainable development to their activities.

On the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Malaysia firmly believes that any concern that any party may have on such matters can be best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Malaysia also firmly believes in the need for nuclear weapon non-proliferation control arrangements to be transparent and open to participation by all States, and to ensure that they do not impose restrictions on access to the material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes required by developing countries for their continued development.

It is also a matter of extreme importance that the IAEA secretariat be allowed to maintain and enhance its impartiality and professionalism, particularly in carrying out its safeguards verification activities. Malaysia strongly rejects any attempt by any party to politicize the work of the IAEA, including its Technical Cooperation Programme, as that is tantamount to a violation of the statute of the IAEA.

In parallel, there is also a need for nuclear-weapon States and all States that are not parties to the NPT to exercise greater political will in favour of general, complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament, as called for under the Treaty.

At the operational level, Malaysia firmly believes in the need for the IAEA to sustain a proper balance of emphasis between the three pillars of its mandate on peaceful applications of nuclear technology, including technical cooperation, nuclear safety and security, and nuclear weapon non-proliferation safeguards and verification. In that regard, Malaysia does not see any need to impose any new or additional legally binding safeguards obligation on NPT States parties as a prerequisite for the peaceful use of nuclear technology beyond those of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Model Additional Protocol.

In order to preserve the relevance of the IAEA to the needs of its developing member States, renewed attention should be directed to the promotional aspects of the Agency's mandate in terms of technical cooperation. In view of the respective obligations of member States concerning IAEA safeguards, Malaysia rejects any approach that would have the effect of granting a right for the IAEA secretariat to exclude certain technologies from the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme.

Malaysia believes that any notion of a global nuclear order should not worsen the dichotomy between developing and developed member States by endorsing an emerging regime of nuclear technology suppliers and recipients on top of an existing regime of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. That is especially important in the current period, where more developing States need to develop legitimate peaceful nuclear power programmes to ensure their energy security and long-term sustainable development.

Malaysia further believes that any initiative to develop any multilateral approach to the nuclear fuel cycle and fuel supply assurances should not create such a new regime of nuclear technology haves and have-nots. Malaysia firmly believes that the establishment of any such multilateral approach or regime should be based on extensive, comprehensive and transparent consultation between all interested parties and member States, and that all decisions should be taken by consensus.

Finally, Malaysia would like to express once again its appreciation to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the IAEA, as well as to the IAEA secretariat for their significant and valuable work in fulfilling the three pillars of the Agency's mandate. Malaysia pledges its full support to the IAEA, as one of the organizations of the United Nations system, so that it may continue to uphold and maintain its central and universal role in addressing the enormous challenges ahead.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to express Japan's appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for having submitted the Agency's annual report.

The IAEA plays a crucial role in maintaining peace and promoting global prosperity. It disseminates the benefits of nuclear technology for humanity. It verifies non-proliferation. It provides services to developing countries. Those functions are becoming increasingly important.

Japan has been making significant contributions to the IAEA as a member of its Board of Governors since its foundation and also as a lead country in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Japan adheres to the three non-nuclear principles and is committed to strengthening the IAEA safeguards system by sharing its advanced safeguards technology. The scientific knowledge and technology acquired by Japan is shared with many developing countries through the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme.

Nuclear energy provides great capacity and potential for ensuring a reliable and clean energy supply. The value of nuclear energy has been rediscovered in our common efforts to combat global warming. In the recent years of the so-called nuclear renaissance, a growing number of countries are expressing their interest in introducing or expanding nuclear power programmes.

Nuclear power programmes must be developed in the most secure way and strictly for peaceful purposes. It is vitally important that non-proliferation safeguards, nuclear safety and nuclear security — in other words, the "three S's" — be ensured. The role of the IAEA is therefore becoming ever more important. Earlier this year, an international initiative proposed by Japan on three S's-based nuclear energy infrastructure was launched at the Hokkaido Toyako summit of the Group

of Eight. In cooperation with the Agency, Japan would like to take measures to follow up that initiative and expand support to those countries planning to start up nuclear power generation.

As the only country that has endured atomic bombings, Japan is determined to continue to work strenuously for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. As part of such efforts, Japan, together with many sponsors, has just presented a draft resolution on nuclear disarmaments to the current session of the General Assembly.

The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will provide another important opportunity. The second session of the Preparatory Committee, held in April to May this year, was more substantive than that held last year, and it successfully adopted a procedural agenda. We hope that the third session will be productive and that it will pave the way to a successful Review Conference.

The International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, established this year by Japan and Australia, has commenced its activity by holding its first meeting in Sydney last week. We hope that the Commission will also make meaningful contributions to the success of the 2010 Review Conference.

Nuclear non-proliferation must be verified through the internationally credible and objective safeguards system. Japan has made every effort to earn international confidence in its extensive activities by fully cooperating with the IAEA and maintaining a high level of transparency. As a result, the IAEA has concluded that Japan's nuclear programmes are exclusively for peaceful purposes. The integrated safeguards system has now been implemented in Japan and the world's first site level integrated safeguards approach was introduced last month for facilities, including a reprocessing plant, in the most efficient manner.

The nuclear development undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a threat to the peace and security not only of Japan, but also of East Asia and the entire international community. It represents a serious challenge to the NPT regime. In the Six-Party Talks, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not yet agreed to a concrete framework of verifications.

The establishment of an effective verification framework by the Six-Party Talks is essential for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. By first striving towards an expeditious agreement of such a framework, Japan will continue to actively work towards the peaceful resolution of nuclear issues within the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

Iran has, regrettably, continued and even expanded its uranium enrichment-related activities, despite repeated calls by the international community. In order to remove concerns and to gain the confidence of the international community, Iran has to fully cooperate with the Agency and respond sincerely to the requirements set forth by the relevant IAEA Board and Security Council resolutions. Japan continues to work towards a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the issue.

The vital missions of the IAEA continue to grow. I assure the Assembly that Japan will continue to play a leading role in contributing to the work of the IAEA with its experience and knowledge. Japan has fielded Ambassador Yukiya Amano, the former Chairman of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, as a candidate to be the next Director General of the IAEA. I strongly urge members' support for his candidacy.

Mr. Gatan (Philippines): The Philippines welcomes the report introduced by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and recognizes the importance of the Agency. At the same time, the Philippines agrees with the Director General's assessment that the Agency is at a crossroads. Since it was founded some 50 years ago, the IAEA has helped member States achieve their development goals and contributed to international peace and security. The world today faces a complex web of challenges, such as the fluctuating and unpredictable cost of fossil fuel, climate change, food and financial crises and a political environment that impinges on the relevance and effectiveness of the Agency. The Philippines believes that, for the Agency to move forward to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades, an enabling environment for a reinvigorated global nuclear order is necessary.

The Philippines foresees a renaissance of nuclear energy over the next two decades that will be an overarching force that will create opportunities as well as challenges for member States and the IAEA itself. Driven by fluctuating fossil fuel prices and the fact that

this energy source is finite and harmful to the environment, many countries are increasingly turning to nuclear energy.

Given that development, there must be training for a new generation of human resources; the design of reactors that are safe, secure, economical and proliferation-resistant; an assured supply of nuclear fuel; radioactive waste management, including disposal; effective and quick radiological emergency response system; and public acceptance. Towards those ends, the Philippines supports strengthened cooperation at the regional and international levels.

The Philippines is also of the view that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — specifically the use of nuclear power, which can lead to sustained development — provide immense benefits for developing countries. In that regard, the Philippines Government is reassessing the possibility of using nuclear power as one of the sources of energy to meet the ever-growing demands from our energy sector, brought about by a robust and growing economy.

Enlarging the contribution of nuclear applications is important not only for their contributions to the well-being of humanity, but also for the concept of the universality of benefits to member States. The Philippines believes that an expansion of the mandate of the Agency in that regard will strengthen the support of the developing countries for the IAEA. We reiterate the critical role of the Agency's safeguards and verification activities in ensuring nuclear non-proliferation. The Philippines commends the efforts of the Director General and the Secretariat in that regard.

The Philippines and the IAEA have expansive links in other areas of technical cooperation, and that partnership has accomplished much in terms of increasing industrial productivity, the irradiation of food exports, access to clean drinking water and addressing other environmental challenges.

The Philippines and the IAEA also cooperate in the important field of cancer therapy through the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT). The Philippines is pleased that the Agency made that a priority activity, given the rise in number of cancer patients, particularly in the developing world. That collaboration with PACT will lead to enhanced cancer training capabilities in the region in the context of the regional cancer training network. The Philippines urges member States to continue to support the Programme through additional contributions.

The Philippines commends the achievement of the Agency in its comprehensive programme to combat the risk of nuclear terrorism and to assist Member States in strengthening their nuclear security. The Philippines appreciates the Agency's assistance in starting its nuclear security programme.

As more countries look to the possibility of adding nuclear power to satisfy their ever-increasing energy needs and as demand for technical cooperation from developing countries continues to increase to meet development needs, the Agency must continue to play its vital role in enabling developing countries to use science and technology for development and for maintaining international peace and security. Needless to say, the IAEA can do so only with a renewed sense of cooperation and strong partnerships with Member States.

In closing, let me reiterate the continuing cooperation and commitment of the Philippines to the IAEA as we meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.

Mr. De Figueiredo (Angola): Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann on his election to preside over the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Agency's secretariat for the comprehensive 2007 annual report, through which we have learned more about the activities carried out by the Agency in the past year under the three pillars of its mandate: technology, safety, and security and verification. The 2007 annual report confirms that the Agency's activities are central to the maximization of the use of nuclear technology for socio-economic development and for preventing its misuse for non-peaceful purposes.

The Republic of Angola attaches paramount importance to the Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA, as it considers it to be an efficient tool for the use of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes. It contributes to the solution of problems in areas such as human and animal health, agriculture and food, industry, groundwater management, energy production and the environment. In that connection, the

Angolan Government has noted with appreciation the information contained in the Agency's *Technical Cooperation Report 2007*, indicating that 122 member States and territories benefited from the technical assistance provided by the IAEA in the year 2007. Thirty-seven African countries benefited from that assistance in the same year, with the Agency's support essentially concentrated on human health, agriculture and food.

The eradication or control of cancer, sleeping sickness, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and pest insects is one of the important preconditions for the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger by 50 per cent by 2015, as foreseen by the United Nations. In that regard, the Government of Angola strongly supports the Agency programme for the application of the sterile insect technique in member States to combat the tsetse fly. Research with a view to utilizing that technique against anopheles, locusts and other pest insects should be intensified.

The cooperation with the African Union and other pertinent regional and international institutions aimed at harmonizing all efforts in conformity with the African Union's Pan-African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign should be strengthened.

The partnership between the IAEA and the Food and Agriculture Agency of the United Nations (FAO) has successfully resulted in a strengthening of the capacity to apply nuclear technology in key agriculture projects. That includes the efficiency and sustainability of land and water management; breeding new crops with special qualities and adapted to marginal environments; improving animal production and health; controlling insects that are major pests for plants and livestock; and increasing food safety while facilitating international trade. Taking into consideration all the aforementioned benefits deriving from that partnership, the Government of Angola expresses its deep concern about the intention of the FAO to terminate that valuable cooperation at the end of this year, and appeals to both organizations to review the issue.

With the support of the Agency, the Angolan Government is implementing eight national projects and participating in 15 regional ones. The national projects deal with the establishment of the first radiotherapy centre in the country; the introduction of nuclear medicine techniques in clinical practices; veterinary drug residue monitoring; isotope techniques to study the effect of bio and inorganic fertilizers; mutation breeding; and the establishment of a non-destructive testing laboratory for industrial applications.

In 2007, Angolan technicians benefited from scientific visits and research grants abroad. In that context, special mention is to be made of the field of ionizing radiation. The regulation of its use for medical purposes in several hospitals in the capital, the inspection of various health-care centres in the country and the installation and use of X-ray equipment and other radioactive sources oriented towards industrial radiography have greatly contributed to providing better assistance to the population. My Government wishes to strengthen its cooperation with the Agency on matters concerning radiotherapy and nuclear medicine in order to strengthen the National Oncology Centre.

For the 2009-2011 cycle, the Angolan Government seeks support for the implementation of seven projects in the areas of nuclear physics, agriculture, human health, water resources, industrial applications and radiation protection. Four have already been selected: the establishment of a phase II laboratory for teaching nuclear physics; strengthening national capability in medical physics; strengthening national capability in the prevention, maintenance and repair of scientific instruments and nuclear medicine equipment; and national regulatory control and occupational radiation protection programmes.

With regard to the implementation of the IAEA safeguards, the Angolan Government recognizes the right of all States to make full use of nuclear technology and scientific applications without discrimination and in conformity with the Agency's statute.

To conclude, the Government of the Republic of Angola recommends the approval of the report of the IAEA by the General Assembly.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): It is a profound honour and pleasure to address this Assembly on behalf of my delegation on the important agenda item before us for consideration in this plenary meeting of the General Assembly today. In that regard, I would like at the outset to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to the Director General of the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, for his informative report on the work of the Agency.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his note (A/63/276) transmitting the report of the Agency to the General Assembly. I am very confident that both documents will make a useful contribution to an informed consideration of, in particular, draft resolution A/63/L.6, submitted for adoption in connection with the agenda item now being discussed.

As we all know, the IAEA has been working for the realization of the "Atoms for Peace" vision since the day of its establishment. It is indeed gratifying to recall that the Agency and its Director General won the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize for their outstanding contribution to global peace and security. We felt a modest sense of satisfaction at seeing the Agency celebrate its fiftieth anniversary with such a magnificent achievement.

As a founding member of the IAEA, Ethiopia has always attached and will continue to attach great significance to the maintenance of global peace and security, all the more so in connection with the specific area upon which the Agency is entrusted and mandated to focus.

As regards the use of nuclear energy, I am pleased to inform this gathering that Ethiopia is engaged in a number of national and regional projects applying nuclear techniques with the aim of addressing various socio-economic development problems in the areas of agriculture, human health, water resource management, energy planning, non-destructive testing, nuclear instrumentation and radiation protection. The country is pursuing a focused approach in areas of high relevance to promoting socio-economic development objectives.

Our biggest technical cooperation project with the IAEA is aimed at eradicating the tsetse fly from the 25,000 square kilometres in the southern Rift Valley area of Ethiopia. Initiated in 1997, the project uses the sterile insect technique (SIT) as part of an integrated pest management approach. It is still of the highest priority in Ethiopia's technical cooperation with the Agency, particularly since over 240,000 square kilometres of fertile agricultural land in the western and southern parts of the country are infested by five different species of tsetse fly that transmit trypanosomiasis.

The project includes three major components: suppression of the existing fly population, establishment of a centrally operated sterile insect production plant, and a field operation to control and eradicate the fly population using SIT technology. The suppression activities have already reduced the prevalence of trypanosomiasis among the livestock in the treated area. A tsetse fly-breeding and irradiation facility in Addis Ababa was officially inaugurated in February 2007, and the first pilot release of sterile tsetse flies was successfully carried out, with the encouraging result of a 95-per-cent survival rate two to three weeks after release.

The project has made significant progress with the support of the IAEA, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the OPEC Fund for International Development, as well as with generous assistance from the Governments of the United States of America and China. The African Development Bank and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, funded by the Government of Japan, have also joined our efforts to make that model project a success story in Africa, where about 37 countries are believed to have been seriously affected by the problem. We are greatly encouraged by the firm commitment of all those international organizations and development partners to continue to support the efforts of the Ethiopian Government, for which we remain sincerely grateful.

Ethiopia's technical cooperation activities with the Agency in the areas of human health and water resource management have also resulted in a modest national infrastructure for the application of nuclear medicine, radiotherapy and isotope hydrology. The country recently acquired a new cobalt machine, with a new source, through a cost-sharing arrangement between the Agency and the Government to help improve the only radiotherapy centre still serving the country's more than 77 million people.

Some preliminary data indicate that only about 400 cancer patients out of an estimated 115,000 new cancer cases per annum are treated by means of radiotherapy. That clearly shows the inadequacy of the services in that critical area of concern. For that reason the Government of Ethiopia, in collaboration with the IAEA, has developed an action plan to extend radiotherapy and nuclear medicine services to five hospitals located in different parts of the country. We therefore call on all our development partners to step up their generous technical and financial support to

help us implement the action plan and save the lives of thousands of people dealing with cancer through well-equipped and expanded radiotherapy and nuclear medicine services in the country.

In addition, our technical cooperation with the IAEA to apply isotope techniques in managing our water resources has enabled us to build some basic capacity to generate useful isotopic data. The establishment of an isotope hydrology laboratory at Addis Ababa University and a national groundwater database system, as well as training the necessary personnel, constitute some of the major strides made so far in laying the basic infrastructure for an Ethiopian groundwater resources programme, which is part of the Government's 15-year water sector development programme.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has shown some promising steps towards enhancing the relevance and efficiency of its activities, including through its Joint Division with the IAEA, which is important for developing and least developed countries in particular. The Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture has been especially instrumental in creating synergy between the two organizations and, from our perspective, in supporting our efforts to eradicate the tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis. Ethiopia believes that any measure to terminate the Joint FAO/IAEA Division would adversely affect that synergy, with a shared objective of contributing to the maintenance of global food security. We therefore call for the reinforcement of that useful partnership between the two global organizations.

We also firmly believe that provision of adequate and predictable resources to the Agency's programmes and, more importantly, balanced distribution of resources to the Agency's safeguards, nuclear safety and technical cooperation activities need to be ensured. The Technical Cooperation Programme plays a crucial role in transferring nuclear technology to developing member States of the Agency.

As the IAEA is expected to increase its efficiency and effectiveness in nuclear verification, nuclear safety and technology transfer, Ethiopia realizes the Agency's need to upgrade its laboratory and computation facilities and to enhance its management information system, so as to maintain its competence and independence. In line with that, implementation of the external auditor's recommendation to adopt International Public Sector Accounting Standards and an Agency-wide information system for programme support needs to be adequately addressed and supported by Member States.

Ethiopia believes that promoting the peaceful use of nuclear programmes would have manifold benefits for all member States and humanity at large. In that regard, ratification and implementation of the additional protocol to the safeguards agreement and the modified small quantities protocol would help to enhance the verification process by the IAEA as the competent global authority mandated to do so. However, in addition to all that, universal application of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is truly critical to ensuring global peace and security.

As one of the founding members of the Agency, Ethiopia is cognizant of its responsibility to control radioactive and other nuclear materials and to promote the peaceful use of nuclear applications for global and regional security. Moreover, as an outgoing member of the IAEA Board of Governors, Ethiopia has also had the honour and pleasure of serving member States of the Agency to its level best in that capacity. We wish the incoming members of the Board of Governors every success and assure them of our continued cooperation and commitment to the lofty ideals of the Agency.

Ethiopia has ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Pelindaba Treaty on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. We have done so on the basis of our long-standing commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and, ultimately, to a nuclear-threat-free world. In that regard, it is important to underscore that nuclear non-proliferation efforts can lead eventually to a nuclear-threat-free world if, and only if, they are complemented by genuine disarmament measures by all nuclear-weapon States.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our profound thanks and appreciation to the IAEA, in particular to its governance and leadership, for their dedication to strengthening crucially essential technical cooperation activities between the Agency and my country. I would also like to reassure the Assembly that, apart from abiding by its international obligations as a member State, Ethiopia will continue to do its utmost to further

enhance the positive spirit of cooperation with the Agency and with our development partners, who have thus far made generous contributions to our development endeavours in this particular field.

Mr. Pramudwinai (Thailand): It is with great appreciation that the delegation of Thailand took note of the 2007 annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/63/276). Having just completed our term as a member of the Agency's Board of Governors for the period 2006 to 2008, Thailand takes this opportunity to reaffirm its continued support for the Agency's indispensable role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and strengthening the non-proliferation regime. Thailand believes that the IAEA's role in enhancing human security and the capacity of Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals should be accentuated.

Over the years, nuclear applications in the fields of human health and agriculture have been the hallmarks of partnership between Thailand and the IAEA. My delegation commends the Agency's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy and its recently formalized partnership with the World Health Organization, which is geared towards preventing cancer and reducing cancer rates in developing nations. We also support the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. Thailand sees the merit of continuing the FAO/IAEA partnership with a view to responding to the demands and needs of Member States vis-à-vis food safety and food security.

For developing countries to reap the benefits of nuclear technology, the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme remains the key component. On our part, we have maintained active collaboration with the Agency in various capacity-building activities. We will continue to do so in the years to come.

Thailand believes that, as the Agency charts its future course in the so-called global nuclear order, effective management of the Agency will be crucial to enable it to respond adequately to various proliferation challenges. We believe that it is important for the Agency to be provided with sufficient, assured and predictable resources to do its job. In that regard, my delegation commends the Director General's initiative to establish the Commission of Eminent Persons on the future of the Agency. We take note of the report of the Commission, which will be an important contribution in improving the work of the Agency between now and 2020, and beyond.

Regarding another area of the global nuclear order, Thailand wishes to mention our proposal, along with that of the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), for the establishment of the South Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. We support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions of the world. Any possible forum for an exchange of experiences on nuclear-weapon-free zones should be welcomed as constructive. The efforts of Mongolia in hosting the meeting of the focal points of all regional nuclear-weapon-free zones in April 2009 are highly commendable.

Strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime is a common and shared responsibility of the international community. Thailand is fully committed to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We underscore the role of the IAEA as the sole multilateral authority for safeguards and verification. We also support efforts to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system, including the Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols. As we approach the convening of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which is to be held in New York next year, my delegation hopes that the deliberations will lead to further progress on substantive issues. In that regard, Thailand is also hopeful that the international community will further step up its efforts to honour its NPT commitments, on both the nuclear non-proliferation and the nuclear disarmament fronts.

My delegation takes note of the Director General's report to the Board of Governors on the implementation of safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran throughout the past year. While we fully support the inalienable right of every NPT State party to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, we must ensure that that right is pursued in accordance with the obligations under the NPT, the comprehensive safeguards agreements and the additional protocols. Thailand looks forward to a peaceful settlement of the Iran nuclear issue. We urge all parties concerned to stay the course of diplomacy and to refrain from confrontation.

On the recent developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Thailand expresses its support for the ongoing dialogue within the framework of the Six-Party Talks aimed at achieving long-term peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. We welcome the progress made towards the full and balanced implementation of the 2005 Joint Statement. On our part, Thailand will continue to work closely with our partners in the ASEAN Regional Forum to contribute to progress in the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

We commend the IAEA's role as a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and join other members of the international community in praising the Agency's annual report, which not only reflects a track record of accomplishments but also provides a realistic outlook of where future challenges lie. In that regard, Thailand reiterates its full confidence in the integrity, impartiality and professionalism of Director General Mohamed ElBaradei and the IAEA secretariat in continuing that important work.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the new member States joining the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), namely, the Sultanate of Oman, the independent State of Papua New Guinea and the Kingdom of Lesotho. I wish them every success in their work at the Agency. The enlargement in the Agency's membership is evidence of the growing prestige of that organization.

Ukraine is satisfied with the fact that the Agency has continued to act in accordance with the three main pillars of its activity, that is, technology, safety and verification. Ukraine, which has 15 operational units at four nuclear power plants, fully recognizes the role of the Agency in developing nuclear power applications. Nuclear power will remain an important energy component providing for the economic security of the State from a middle- and long-term perspective, as envisaged in Ukraine's energy strategy for the period until 2030.

The Technical Cooperation Programme continues to be one of the principal mechanisms for carrying out the Agency's basic mission. In 2007, Ukraine hosted eight regional and interregional events within the framework of the Programme. Their topics reflected both Ukraine's considerable expertise and its needs with regard to the dissemination of knowledge and training in the field of nuclear safety and security. In that regard, I would like to mention the fact that Ukrainian experts took an active part in the work of the Agency's Safety Standards Committees.

We welcome the Agency's activities in the area of nuclear safety. Of particular importance for Ukraine in that field are the problems of radioactive waste management during the decommissioning of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and the transformation of the shelter object into an ecologically safe system. The Agency continues to provide assistance in the remediation of the affected territories in Ukraine. The results of the Agency's recent activities in those areas laid the groundwork for the United Nations Action Plan on Chernobyl to 2016, which was prepared this year by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl. We hope that the attention devoted to the Chernobyl issue will not decrease, since further joint efforts are required in order to resolve that challenge to the entire international community.

Ukraine notes with satisfaction that, last year, the Agency completed a range of projects on the harmonization of safety assessment processes and the demonstration of safety during the decommissioning of nuclear facilities. Of the 32 nuclear reactors being dismantled around the world, 4 are in Ukraine, and we benefit from the lessons learned in that regard.

We welcome the fact that, last year, the Agency continued to develop projects in the area of human health. In particular, Ukraine would like to emphasize the importance of the Agency-initiated Programme of Action on Cancer Therapy, from which my country also benefits. In 2007, the Agency provided assistance aimed at improving nuclear security arrangements through the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plans, in which Ukraine also actively participated. In particular, the Agency continued to strengthen border control capabilities in many Member States by providing radiation-detection instruments and by training hundreds of people in the area of nuclear-security-related responsibilities.

I would like to note with appreciation that, in 2007, the Agency continued its efforts to develop nuclear fuel supply assurances. Ukraine, which possesses sufficient deposits of uranium, looks forward to participating in future consortiums and to providing uranium ore to meet relevant needs. We are open to international cooperation in that area. As a potential uranium exporter, Ukraine welcomes the formulation

by the Agency last year of draft best practices in the areas of radiation management, health and safety, waste and the environment and related regulatory aspects of uranium mining.

We appreciate the Agency's support for the process of converting research reactors from highly enriched uranium to low-enriched uranium fuel. Ukraine fully supports that programme and took an active part in repatriating highly enriched uranium to its country of origin.

We highly value the Agency's International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles. Last year, Ukraine decided to provide the project with a cost-free expert.

Ukraine wishes to reaffirm its support for activities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system and welcomes the Agency's efforts to prevent the diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to military purposes, to detect covert weapon activities and to reduce the risk of nuclear and radiological terrorism.

In conclusion, I would like to express our great appreciation for the efforts of Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the Agency, and of the Agency's secretariat to strengthen international cooperation in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which were demonstrated last year. Through its nuclear power, nuclear applications and technical cooperation programmes, the Agency continues to meet global challenges and to assist member States in addressing issues such as energy supply, nuclear safety, human health, food security, water availability, resource conservation and environmental protection.

Finally, I wish to state that Ukraine fully supports draft resolution A/63/L.6, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

Mr. Kim Bonghyun (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his comprehensive briefing on the Agency's broad range of activities. We are pleased to take note of the Agency's recent achievements in the fields of nuclear energy, nuclear applications, safety and security and verification, as described in the annual report of the IAEA for 2007 (see A/63/276).

The Republic of Korea underlines the importance of the IAEA in promoting the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, and we would like to reaffirm our commitment to cooperate with the Agency in all areas of its activities.

My delegation also commends the recent report entitled *Reinforcing the Global Nuclear Order for Peace and Prosperity: The Role of the IAEA to 2020 and Beyond*. In our view, that report was timely, and the global nuclear system should be consolidated and reinforced in order to address the new opportunities and challenges arising from the expanded use of nuclear energy. The IAEA, with its expertise and professionalism, should continue to play a crucial role in supporting the nuclear renaissance in the coming years.

In that regard, my delegation would like to touch upon some issues that we consider relevant to the future work of the IAEA.

First, the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards agreement and the additional protocol is an essential means to improve the current safeguards and verification regime. We would like to call upon those States that have not yet done so to conclude such agreements and bring them into force without delay. The additional protocol should become a verification standard, as recent events have suggested that the comprehensive safeguards agreement alone is no longer adequate in enabling the Agency to fully implement its mandate.

Secondly, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the issue of a new multilateral framework for guaranteeing the supply of nuclear fuel. Any new mechanism should provide economical, reliable and equitable access to nuclear fuels, while limiting proliferation risks. As a major user of nuclear energy, the Republic of Korea will continue to participate in and make positive contributions to the relevant discussions on that issue.

Thirdly, nuclear terrorism remains the most imminent threat to the peace and security of the international community. The *Nuclear Security Report 2008*, in our view, contains very useful information that will assist State and non-State actors alike in addressing certain aspects of that grave issue. We recognize the important role of the Agency as a focal point in facilitating the enhancement of nuclear security at both the national and the international

levels. The Agency's experiences should be shared with other international organizations and with relevant global initiatives.

The expanded use of nuclear energy requires the strengthening of nuclear non-proliferation and heightened security measures as never before. In that regard, my delegation would like to emphasize that the peaceful resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue is vital to securing lasting peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia. My delegation would like to reiterate that the framework of the Six-Party Talks remains the most effective tool for resolving the nuclear issue related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Since last June, we have witnessed ups and downs with regard to that issue. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea submitted a declaration of its nuclear programme in June of this year and, at the heads of delegation meeting of the sixth round of the Six-Party Talks, held in Beijing last July, the participants reached a consensus on the full implementation of the second-phase actions and agreed to establish a verification mechanism and a monitoring mechanism within the Six-Party Talks process.

We welcome the Six-Party Talks being brought back on track through the recent agreements on verification, the subsequent United States action to remove the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from the list of State sponsors of terrorism, and the resumption of disablement measures by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We hope that the next round of Six-Party Talks will be held as soon as possible and that a verification protocol will be concluded among the six parties for verifying the completeness and correctness of the declaration submitted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

My delegation would like to highlight the IAEA's continued essential role in the verification process. As the Six-Party Talks process proceeds, my Government will continue to work closely with all parties concerned to resolve the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear issue in a peaceful manner, and trusts that the international community will continue to render its valuable support in the denuclearization process.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation would like to thank you for having convened this meeting to consider the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It would like to voice its appreciation to the Director General of the Agency for having given a most impressive statement this morning and for having highlighted the challenges now confronting the international community in the area of the exploitation of nuclear energy in the present context.

One thing particularly struck us. The acquisition of the technological capacity for uranium enrichment and the isolation of plutonium makes the countries that benefit from cooperation with the Agency potential nuclear-weapon States, given the ease with which nuclear material can be diverted to military purposes. That observation is all the more concerning since the growing demand for energy is prompting a nuclear renaissance and consequently an increase in the number of countries that wish to have access to nuclear energy as a way to meet their needs.

Access to nuclear energy is an inalienable right of all sovereign States. Nevertheless, it is important that the international community be endowed with the means to prevent an exponential increase in nuclear-weapon States. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the authority of the Agency to ensure unfailing monitoring of nuclear energy production activities through more binding methods of preventing the misuse of existing production capacity for military purposes.

We support the proposal of the Agency to create a multilateral fissile material bank to ensure the ongoing supply of fissile fuel to all existing nuclear installations or those yet to be built, free from political influence. The inability of the IAEA to provide assurances on the nuclear activities of States without an additional protocol or the various other factors that ensure the perceived security of States offer no effective guarantee regarding access to nuclear weapons.

In our view, there is a need to encourage the creation and transfer of a technology for nuclear energy production that does not directly confer the capability of acquiring nuclear weapons. European countries have stated over the last few years that they are making progress in that direction, and that deserves the support of the international community.

The Agency should become further involved in research to widen the technological gap between the capacity to use nuclear energy peacefully and that to produce nuclear weapons. Generally speaking, Benin supports the recommendations of the Commission of

Eminent Persons convened by the Agency to secure the use of nuclear energy for peaceful ends while reducing the risks of proliferation, which are now at an unacceptable level. The international community, however, must also strengthen the multilateral mechanism for the settlement of disputes concerning nuclear materials. The role of the Agency in that respect is critical.

A second major challenge that emerges from the Agency's annual report is the exacerbation of the risks of proliferation to non-State actors in situations involving the spread of registered fissile materials. The fact that in an impressive number of cases the theft of fissile materials has never been resolved exposes us to terrible danger.

The international community should strengthen its capacity to monitor fissile materials and to locate and ensure the recovery of stolen materials. To that end, there is a need to make full use of the potential for cooperation and exchange of information offered by resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors. All States must understand and be aware of the risks linked to that phenomenon and strive to identify a systematic policy of prevention. The creation of a global network for cooperation and the exchange of information would strengthen the effectiveness of those means which the United Nations is using to move forward in that area.

We encourage efforts to promote the use of nuclear energy for the purposes of development, in particular in the areas of agriculture and health. Those are purposes highly beneficial to humanity that will help us to meet existential challenges.

In conclusion, my delegation will support the draft resolution to be adopted on the report of the Agency.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Before giving the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the draft resolution, I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sin Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to stress its position with regard to draft resolution A/63/L.6, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

As described in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report and resolution GC(52)/RES/14, cited in the draft resolution before us, the Agency has not yet abandoned its prejudiced and unfair position on the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula.

The nuclear issue that we are talking about here is a direct product of the hostile policies of the United States of America towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is still designated by the United States as a target for a pre-emptive nuclear strike.

In spite of those undeniable facts, the IAEA has persistently ignored the root causes of the nuclear issue and disregarded the honest and sincere efforts of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to settle the issue. Worse yet, the Agency attempted to infringe upon the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, insisting on special inspections in our country in concert with the United States, which generated the nuclear issue. That biased and unjust attitude of the IAEA only complicated the process of attempting to resolve the nuclear issue.

Unless the IAEA takes an impartial position towards the settlement of the problem, in keeping with its assigned mission, no measures taken or resolutions adopted by the IAEA will help to resolve the nuclear issue. That has been vividly demonstrated throughout the process of attempting to resolve the nuclear issue.

As a result of those considerations, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly rejects resolution GC(52)/RES/14, adopted at the General Conference of the IAEA. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will closely monitor the future stands and activities of the IAEA vis-à-vis the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is consistent in its position that the nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully through dialogue and negotiations. As is well known, there is, on the one hand, the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement, which was agreed by the six parties at the Talks and welcomed by the international community, and, on the other, the principle of action for action, which constitutes a criterion for assessing its

implementation. To date, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has faithfully honoured all of its commitments under every agreement reached by the six parties at the Talks, including the Joint Statement, in conformity with the principle of action for action, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to do so. If the other parties at the Talks do the same by faithfully fulfilling their own obligations, the process of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula will advance smoothly.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to conclude its explanation of position by disclosing Japan's true mindset regarding the nuclear issue. Although it is a party to the Talks and loudly pretends that it is interested in the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, Japan tends to be negative and insincere regarding the resolution of the nuclear issue. Indeed, that attitude is a deliberate, ill-natured move to hamstring the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

As we have witnessed on various occasions during the current session of the General Assembly, most countries, in speaking about the nuclear issue, welcome the recent agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States and express the hope that the Six-Party Talks will make progress. But Japan has been unique in exposing its stereotypes, assigning blame and complaining wherever and whenever opportunities to do so are provided.

It is already widely known that Japan is a very disruptive country that is trying at any cost to avoid meeting its obligations and that has only created artificial obstacles in the process of the Six-Party Talks. What now concerns Japan is that, if the hostile policies of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are terminated, the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is realized and lasting peace and stability is achieved in the region of North-East Asia, Japan will no longer have a pretext for fulfilling its ambition to reinvade the region. Even now, the only thing that Japan wants to do is reclaim the sacred territory of Korea by reviving its militaristic ghosts and disregarding the devastation wrought by its tremendous and large-scale past crimes against humanity, rather than sincerely honour all its commitments under the agreements reached at the Six-Party Talks.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea firmly believes that, if Japan had been excluded from the process of the Six-Party Talks, much greater and better progress would have been made by now in the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/63/L.6. Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since its introduction, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.6?

Draft resolution A/63/L.6 was adopted (resolution 63/6).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Okuda (Japan): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the explanation of position made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The allegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that Japan is insincere in pursuing the settlement of the denuclearization issue of the Korean peninsula is entirely groundless, and we are certainly strongly opposed to that statement. The claim by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that Japan seeks to become a military Power is totally false, and we categorically reject that allegation. In fact, it was the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that created a great threat to peace and security in North-East Asia when it announced that it was carrying out a

nuclear weapons test and launching ballistic missiles. The Security Council made it clear in its resolutions 1695 (2006) and 1718 (2006), which it adopted unanimously, that those acts constituted a clear threat to international peace and security. The sanctions imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have the backing of the entire international community. In order to remove the military threat it has created, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must continue to make efforts towards full implementation of the joint statements of the Six-Party Talks of September 2005. And the statement that our delegation made on the draft resolution earlier today remains valid, which is to say that the nuclear development undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a threat to the peace and security, not only of Japan but also of East Asia and the entire international community. And, therefore, in order to solve this issue, Japan will continue to very sincerely pursue the settlement of this problem.

Mr. Sin Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea believes that the Japanese delegation has not yet understood or grasped the thrust of the statement that we made as an explanation of position before the vote. In fact, it is our duty to make known to the international community what the attitude of Japan is to this nuclear problem. For that purpose, my delegation would like to simply mention some specific cases that show clearly and accurately how Japan is trying in vain and futilely to halt the process of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

(*spoke in English*)

Japan is now behaving very shamelessly in insisting that it will not fulfil its commitment to make economic compensation as agreed upon by the six parties at the Talks. Japan has never tried to implement the issues discussed and agreed upon by the six parties but has instead conducted hectic diplomacy to persuade the United States not to cross the Democratic People's Republic of Korea off its list of State sponsors of terrorism. Unfortunately, these efforts ended with an official announcement by the United States Government, removing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea forever from the list. By insisting that it will not participate in the aforementioned economic compensation, Japan is deliberately neglecting and disturbing the October 3 agreement. It is the ulterior intention of Japan to create hurdles and complexities in the path of the Talks at any cost, in a bid to block resolution of the issue and steadily put strain on the situation on the Korean peninsula.

The Japanese delegation has also mentioned the Security Council resolution, which, I would like to remind every delegation present in this Hall, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has categorically rejected. In order to understand the motivation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reject that resolution, it is very important for everyone gathered here to understand what is at the root of that so-called resolution. I would like to remind all delegations that that Security Council resolution is a product of the hostile United States policy toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is why the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has categorically rejected that resolution, which it considers a product of United States anti-Democratic People's Republic of Korea policies.

Mr. Okuda (Japan): I will be very brief. I would like to draw the attention of the Members of the United Nations to the statement that was just made by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in which it was stated that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea rejected — I repeat, rejected — the Security Council resolutions, which were adopted unanimously. And I think this says much about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's sincerity on this issue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 80?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 105

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(g) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/107)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As indicated in document A/63/107, since the terms of office of Burundi, El Salvador, France, Lesotho, Malaysia, the Philippines and the Russian Federation will expire on 31 December 2008, it will be necessary for the

President of the General Assembly to appoint, during the current session, seven members in order to fill the resulting vacancies. These members will serve for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2009.

After consultations with the Chairmen of the Groups of African States, Asian States, Eastern European States and Western European and other States, I have appointed the Congo, France, Malaysia, Mozambique, the Philippines and the Russian Federation as members of the Committee on Conferences for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2009.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of these appointments?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Regarding the remaining vacant seat to be filled by a Latin American or Caribbean State, I will continue to hold consultations with that regional Group.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 105.

Agenda item 109

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now turn to agenda item 109 entitled "Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations". It is my understanding that there is no request to consider this item at the present session. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item to the sixty-fourth session and to include it in the provisional agenda of the sixty-fourth session?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): This concludes of our consideration of agenda item 109.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.